

Missouri Vocational
Rehabilitation Section of the
Combined State Plan
PYs 2024 - 2027

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Program-Specific Requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

(a) State Rehabilitation Council. All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):

[check box] (A) is an independent State commission.

[X] (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/ Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	1 st term	03/22
Parent Training and Information Center	1 st term	06/20
Client Assistance Program	1 st term	06/13
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	1 st term	03/21
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	1 st term	06/20
Business, Industry, and Labor	1 st term	11/14
Business, Industry, and Labor	1 st term	11/14
Business, Industry, and Labor	1 st term	10/12
Business, Industry, and Labor	1 st term	10/21
Disability Advocacy Groups	1 st term	03/21
Disability Advocacy Groups	1 st term	11/14
Disability Advocacy Groups	1 st term	10/21
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	1 st term	03/21
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	NA	NA

State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	1 st term	03/24
State Workforce Development Board	1 st term	03/25
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	Awaiting	Appointment

If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) works with Governor Michael Parson's Missouri Boards and Commissions Office on a regular basis. This office is responsible for appointments to the SRC. The director is invited to each quarterly Council meeting. The SRC liaison contacts the director prior to each Council meeting for an update on the status of appointments. The current governor allows four appointments each year enabling the Council to improve on the currency of its members. Previous administrations' appointments were made sparingly leading to a lapse in current terms.

MVR has met with the Boards and Commissions director to review Section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR § 361.17(b) and RSA-TACs 12-01 and 23-02 in order to explain the SRC's role in ensuring Missourians with disabilities receive quality services. MVR has provided composition requirements and expressed the importance of maintaining a complete, current, and functioning Council. MVR's legal liaison has also spoken to the governor's office on the Council's behalf. MVR operates under the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The Chief of Governmental Affairs, DESE's legal liaison, has also spoken to the governor's office on the Council's behalf. MVR will request that the liaison once again open and maintain a dialogue with Governor Parson's office to convey the urgency in addressing expired terms.

The Boards and Commissions Office has the expectation that members serve at the governor's pleasure and remain on the Council until a new appointment is made even if this expectation results in a member serving beyond his or her term. The Boards and Commissions Office does not consider years of service or when prior appointments were made. The office looks at the number of governor-taken actions, which as mentioned above, is four appointments a year.

With 250 boards and commissions in Missouri, the office has many positions to fill; therefore, it focuses more on appointments and less on reappointments. Upon recent contact with the boards and commissions' liaison, MVR learned the governor's office is currently focusing on Senate confirmed appointments and will begin review of board appointments within a June/July timeframe. MVR will stay abreast of the upcoming appointment reviews.

MVR will build upon its relationship with the Boards and Commissions Office and continue to provide information on required Council representation as required in Section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. It will request additional meetings with the Boards and Commissions Office and reiterate that Council input and recommendations are critical to the development and implementation of the state plan. MVR

will stress the importance of the Council's role in the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. It will emphasize to the governor's office the significance of maintaining a fully constituted SRC.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) reviewed the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation's (MVR) services portion of the Combined State Plan for the Title I and VI B programs. On behalf of the Council, Earl Brown, SRC chairperson, submitted the following comments and suggestions:

1. The SRC Planning Committee, acting by proxy for the Council, had an opportunity to review and comment on MVR's services portion of the Combined State Plan. We are in support of your plan.
2. We approve of MVR's commitment to cooperating, collaborating, and coordinating with other components of the statewide workforce development system. Improving partnerships and supporting individuals, including youth and students, with disabilities to obtain competitive integrated employment benefits everyone.
3. We support MVR's goals and priorities of increasing the number of participants receiving training services, increasing the number of students with disabilities accessing VR services, and strengthening relationships with employers. The SRC recommends that MVR work on strategies to assist them in reaching its goals and priorities and provide updates on its performance at future Council meetings.
4. The SRC does recognize that rising costs and limited funding may necessitate the closing of categories and the institution of a moving waiting list for services. The Council believes that any waiting list is undesirable and will result in more individuals becoming dependent on public assistance and increase the number of individuals who drop from the program before services are provided. The SRC will work with MVR on strategies to keep the waiting list open and will ask for updates at the Council meetings.
5. Recent retirements and resignations have impacted the number of employees with disabilities. The SRC encourages MVR to continue its efforts to recruit individuals with disabilities.
6. The SRC would like to acknowledge MVR's work on the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. We agree with the expected levels of performance MVR submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration and expect the final negotiated rates will be achieved in the upcoming years.
7. The SRC shares with MVR a concern that accessing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities can be challenging. The Council continues to support MVR's efforts to find solutions by encouraging innovation and job creation and focusing on high quality employment outcomes. MVR is expanding opportunities for employment outcomes through its pilot programs on customized employment and peer mentoring for youth and students with disabilities.

8. The SRC reviewed the draft of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council's 2023 annual report and offered full support of the program's performance, data, and services. The client success stories are powerful statements of the program's impact. We are impressed with the consumer satisfaction feedback summarized in the report. The statewide results were at 94 percent and above, which are some of the highest in the nation. We are pleased that the feedback is shared with staff as a resource and utilized for service and process improvement.

9. The Council appreciates the work and inspiration that went into developing priorities for the upcoming program year. During our quarterly meetings, we had the opportunity to work with MVR in setting priorities in addition to the program's goals and strategies. We are excited to see that MVR is not just developing a "priorities" document but is actualizing the priorities through its service delivery. From MVR's staff presentations at our quarterly meetings, we are informed of the program's progress. We recognize MVR's commitment to its culture of support, encouragement, and caring.

10. The SRC had opportunities in the past year to provide input on other important matters with your agency. The Council provided recommendations on and approval of policy revisions and proposed administrative rule changes. It collaborated with other disability-related councils and participated in and reviewed feedback from the public hearings. We will continue to review hearing decisions and assess the need for hearing officer positions during our meetings.

The SRC appreciates the opportunity to work with MVR on these matters of importance to individuals with disabilities in the state of Missouri.

Provide the VR agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.

Response to SRC recommendation 1: MVR is pleased that the SRC is in support of MVR's services portion of the Combined State Plan.

Response to SRC recommendation 2: MVR is pleased that the SRC recognizes our commitment to supporting WIOA initiatives and our desire to work with other components of the statewide workforce development system in improving competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals, including youth and students, with disabilities.

Response to SRC recommendation 3: MVR appreciates the SRC's support of the program's goals and priorities. MVR agrees to comply with the SRC's recommendations to work on the goals and priorities and update the SRC at quarterly meetings about its performance.

Response to SRC recommendation 4: MVR agrees with the SRC that waiting lists are undesirable and have many negative effects on individuals with disabilities. It will continue to implement cost effective practices so that more individuals can receive services. MVR looks forward to working with the SRC on strategies to keep the waiting list open and will provide updates at each Council meeting.

Response to SRC recommendation 5: MVR agrees with the SRC that it should continue its efforts of hiring individuals with disabilities. It currently has several strategies to address this priority area and has additional plans to expand this recruitment through the work of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team.

Response to SRC recommendations 6: MVR will work on negotiating the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. We appreciate your support of the expected levels of performance submitted to Rehabilitation Services Administration. We will provide an update on the final performance measures once they have been negotiated.

Response to SRC recommendations 7: MVR will continue to work on increasing quality employment outcomes and developing maintaining strong partnerships with other agencies and providing effective employment services.

Response to SRC recommendation 8: MVR appreciates the SRC's feedback on and approval of the annual report. We are proud of the positive consumer satisfaction results and will continue sharing the feedback with staff and utilizing it to improve service delivery.

Response to SRC recommendation 9: MVR appreciates the Council's involvement in developing priorities for the upcoming program year in addition to our goals and strategies. We will present the program's progress during upcoming meetings. We are proud of the culture that we have established with support from the Council.

Response to SRC recommendation 10: MVR values and agrees with SRC's recommendations on proposed administrative rule and policy changes. Public hearing feedback was shared with the Council, and MVR appreciates the SRC's interest in the hearings and comments received. MVR will continue to present information on hearing decisions and work with the Council on assessing the need for hearing officer positions.

MVR expresses its sincere thanks and appreciation for the excellent assistance from the SRC this year. The SRC has been extremely active and helpful with reviewing, analyzing, and advising MVR on its performance. MVR looks forward to working with the SRC in the future to continue serving individuals with disabilities.

MVR did not reject any of the Council's input or recommendations.

(b) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

(1) The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:

MVR and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) jointly conduct the comprehensive statewide needs assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Missourians with disabilities, over a three-year period. The last assessment was completed in 2021 and covered PY 2018 through PY 2020. MVR has contracted with the

Institute of Public Policy through the University of Missouri to conduct the next assessment scheduled for completion in 2024, which will cover PY 2021 through PY 2023.

MVR submits the results of the needs assessment to the Rehabilitation Services Administration during the four-year combined state plan cycle, two-year modification cycle or anytime circumstances require a modification in accordance with 20 CFR § 676.145. This section pertains to the statewide assessment period completed in 2021 and illustrates all areas of need. The conclusions and recommendations of these assessments are incorporated into MVR's goals and priorities for the purpose of improving services to individuals with disabilities.

MVR uses a mixed methods approach to collect, in aggregate, qualitative and quantitative information on the rehabilitation needs of Missouri individuals with disabilities. Information resources include:

a. Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

MVR routinely surveys a random sample of clients throughout various stages of open cases and case closures to obtain feedback on MVR services and to determine how to better serve the needs of individuals with disabilities.

b. Public Hearings

Annually, MVR conducts public hearings throughout the state to obtain input on the state plan, its key goals and priorities, plan changes and any other topic related to MVR services.

c. Input from the State Rehabilitation Council

During quarterly and ad hoc committee meetings, the SRC provides input to MVR on the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities.

d. Strategic Teams

MVR utilizes both ad hoc and on-going teams, such as the CRP-MVR Steering Committee Team, Transition Team, and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team, to gather data from its partners, school districts and underserved individuals with disabilities.

e. Analysis of Performance Measures and Program Data

On a quarterly basis, MVR management reviews data to ensure the program is meeting its goals. The SRC annually reviews and analyzes this information with MVR and receives quarterly program updates.

f. MVR uses an online questionnaire to survey its staff on the rehabilitation needs of Missourians with disabilities, including students and youth with disabilities. The MVR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team reviews the results of the survey in order to make recommendations to administration on how to best utilize the feedback. MVR also reviews information from its annual training needs assessment to determine unmet needs of individuals with disabilities.

g. Annually, MVR leadership visits VR district offices to gather input on the needs of clients and individuals with disabilities.

Additional resources include:

- quality assurance case and fiscal reviews
- quarterly reviews of case management data
- census data annually or as data is available
- data from the American Community Survey and U.S. Census Bureau
- data from the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium
- data from Cornell University's Disability Statistics
- data from other state and federal agencies
- data from state and community boards and commissions
- information obtained during WIOA partner team meetings
- due process hearings and mediations
- literature reviews

Feedback from recent public hearings cited that a lack of transportation was a barrier to services. MVR continually reviews this issue for possible resolutions. Offices work with local transportation providers such as OATS and Centers for Independent Living. One of the MVR district offices has a special arrangement with its local public transit agency where the office can order bus passes and provide them directly to clients. Housing, homelessness and affordable childcare were also mentioned.

Considered in this assessment period was the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. MVR expanded its services by adding remote and virtual service options. Staff realized the importance of maintaining client engagement when in-person meetings were not advisable. They quickly adapted to virtual service delivery ensuring the continuation of quality services. MVR worked with its CRP providers to address COVID challenges. MVR raised its fees for service to offset the providers' additional costs incurred. CRPs were given flexible service delivery options so clients' needs could be met. At the onset of the pandemic, MVR met virtually each week with core and combined state plan partners to share updates on service delivery and keep abreast of partners' COVID-related service initiatives.

The following is a summary of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment results in response to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Missouri, particularly the VR service needs of:

A. Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;

According to the 2021 American Community Survey, Missouri's population exceeds 6.1 million. Of that number, 897,969 Missourians report some type of disability. The rate of disability in the state is 14.8 percent.

MVR projects that the number of eligible individuals with most significant disabilities that will receive services will be 13,271. Of that estimate, 6,745 individuals will need SE services.

From the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities:

- SE Services – The nature of the service itself requires an individualized approach based on the needs of an eligible individual. SE services are ongoing support services, including customized employment, and other appropriate services needed to support an individual with a most significant disability to achieve and maintain competitive integrated employment. SE services include customized employment and IPS. Services are provided by CRPs. MVR can provide up to 24 months of community-based job training.
- Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Services – Services include assessment and recommendations for accommodations, assistive devices and rehabilitation technology necessary to improve the quality of work and/or increase work productivity. MVR counselors assess the need and consult with Missouri Assistive Technology.

B. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

MVR will implement an order of selection on December 9, 2024. This action will result in 4,736 unserved individuals. MVR counselors refer individuals waiting for services to appropriate federal and state programs, including other components of the statewide workforce development system to assist with employment, training, housing, food, and clothing needs.

The needs assessment identified underserved individuals with disabilities as minority populations of Hispanics and African-Americans, individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), and individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Hispanic Population:

Based on MVR data for PY 2018 to 2020, on average, there has been a decline in the number of Hispanic clients served. The American Community Survey (ACS) for 2021 shows that the Missouri Hispanic population is 4.6% with 9.5% having a disability. On average from PY 2018 to 2020, MVR served 1,088 Hispanic clients or 3% of its total population served. After analyzing data from the needs assessment, it is determined that these individuals are underserved when compared to the total number of Hispanics with disabilities in Missouri.

From the comprehensive needs assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of Missouri's Hispanic population with disabilities:

- Interpreter Services – These services depend upon the specific needs of clients and are provided by MVR's bilingual MVR staff and state-contracted interpreters. The duration of interpreter services mirrors the length of other services.
- Translated Brochures – MVR has Spanish-translated brochures available on its website.

- Outreach Strategies – MVR is developing awareness activities for areas that have been identified as Hispanic communities.
- Job Placement Services – These services involve specialists who identify and cultivate job placement possibilities in the community. These services offer short-term follow-up support and can last between three and nine months. MVR counselors and CRPs provide job placement services.
- SE Services – The nature of the service itself requires an individualized approach based on the needs of an eligible individual. SE services are ongoing support services, including customized employment, and other appropriate services needed to support an individual with a most significant disability to achieve and maintain competitive integrated employment. SE services include customized employment and IPS. Services are provided by CRPs. MVR can provide up to 24 months of community-based job training.
- Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Services – Services include assessment and recommendations for accommodations, assistive devices and rehabilitation technology necessary to improve the quality of work and/or increase work productivity. MVR counselors assess the need and confer with Missouri Assistive Technology. In addition, MVR has a diversity, equity and inclusion consultant who provides cultural diversity training to all MVR staff. The consultant delivers training specific to each office's population area and assists with developing office plans to address diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Training Services – Services include college, occupational, vocational, customized, literacy, job readiness, disability-related skills training, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and work-based learning experiences.

African-American Population:

Based on MVR data for PY 2018 to 2020, on average, there has been a decline in the number of African-American clients served. The American Community Survey (ACS) for 2021 shows that Missouri's African-American population is 10.8% with 16.2% having a disability. On average from PY 2018 to 2020, MVR served 6,496 African-American clients or 19% of its total population served. MVR's service rate for African-American clients is greater than the rate of African-American Missourians and slightly higher than those with a disability. On average, 19% of all cases closed with successful outcomes were African-American clients. Though there has been a decline in service to African-American clients with disabilities, the data supports that MVR is generally meeting the needs of this population.

From the comprehensive needs assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of Missouri's African-American population with disabilities:

- Job Placement Services – These services involve specialists who identify and cultivate job placement possibilities in the community. These services offer short-term follow-up support and can last between three and nine months. MVR counselors and CRPs provide job placement services.

- SE Services – The nature of the service itself requires an individualized approach based on the needs of an eligible individual. SE services are ongoing support services, including customized employment, and other appropriate services needed to support an individual with a most significant disability to achieve and maintain competitive integrated employment. SE services include customized employment and IPS. Services are provided by CRPs. MVR can provide up to 24 months of community-based job training.
- Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Services – Services include assessment and recommendations for accommodations, assistive devices and rehabilitation technology necessary to improve the quality of work and/or increase work productivity. MVR counselors assess the need and confer with Missouri Assistive Technology. In addition, MVR has a diversity, equity and inclusion consultant who provides cultural diversity training to all MVR staff. The consultant delivers training specific to each office’s population area and assists with developing office plans to address diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Training Services – Services include college, occupational, vocational, customized, literacy, job readiness, disability-related skills training, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and work-based learning experiences.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD):

MVR case data shows on average from PY 2018 to 2020, 2,248 (6%) of individuals with autism/ASD were served, but when looking at the average total number of cases served during this period (28,423), the number of clients with ASD is underserved. On average, only 236 of the 3,521 successful closures for PY 2018 to 2020 were clients with ASD; only 11% of total successful closures.

Accurate figures are difficult to determine as ASD is difficult to diagnose, so some cases go undiagnosed or not reported. The rate of diagnosis for adults with ASD is even less than the rate of diagnosis for children.

MVR reviewed information and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC); the National Autism Society; the Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders 2023 Transition to Adulthood report; NAMI; the Missouri Department of Insurance; The Community Report on Autism 2018; and MVR data. Based on this information and additional research, MVR concludes these individuals are underserved.

From the comprehensive statewide assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of individuals with ASD:

- SE Services – The nature of the service itself requires an individualized approach based on the needs of an eligible individual. SE services are ongoing support services, including customized employment, and other appropriate services needed to support an individual with a most significant disability to achieve and maintain competitive integrated employment. SE services include customized employment and IPS. Services are provided by CRPs. MVR can provide up to 24 months of community-based job training.

- Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Services – Services include assessment and recommendations for accommodations, assistive devices and rehabilitation technology necessary to improve the quality of work and/or increase work productivity. MVR counselors assess the need and consult with Missouri Assistive Technology.
- Job Placement Services – These services involve specialists who identify and cultivate job placement possibilities in the community. These services offer short-term follow-up support and can last between three and nine months. MVR counselors and CRPs provide job placement services.
- Transition Services – Transition services assist eligible students and youth with disabilities to successfully prepare them for transitioning into postsecondary education, vocational training or integrated employment. Services can be provided by MVR and coordinated with the Office of Special Education, local school districts and CRPs. Services are provided for the duration of the case.
- Workplace Modifications – Individuals with ASD may experience difficulties in modulating sensory input. Environmental assessments can be provided to identify distractions such as noise levels, lighting, high traffic areas, etc. Services are provided by CRPs and can overlap SE services usually lasting nine months, but MVR can provide up to 24 months of community-based job training.
- Employment Services Plus (ESP) – ESP is designed to assist an individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder-Adult (ASD-A), Brain Injury (BI), and/or Cultural Deafness/hard of hearing (D/HH) who has barriers that require additional supports to achieve a successful employment outcome. ESP provides augmentative services for clients whose disability-related needs exceed the level of support provided by traditional vocational rehabilitation services but does not merit consideration of SE services.
- Training Services – Services include college, occupational, vocational, customized, literacy, job readiness, disability-related skills training, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and work-based learning experiences.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):

MVR case data shows on average from PY 2018 to 2020, 426 (1%) individuals with TBI were served but when looking at the average total number of cases served during this period (28,423), the number of clients with TBI is underserved. On average, only 82 of the 3,521 successful closures for PY 2018 to 2020 were TBI cases; only 2% of average total successful closures.

MVR reviewed data from the CDC, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, the Brain Injury Associations of America and Missouri, 2020 Missouri Traumatic Brain Injury Targeted Needs Assessment: Key Findings Report, and data from brainline.org. There is currently an estimated 5.3 million Americans (this includes children and adults) who are living with long-term disabilities due to brain injury. In Missouri, this number is 118,000 individuals.

Based on assessment information and the number of clients with TBI, MVR concludes these individuals are underserved.

From the comprehensive statewide assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of individuals with TBI:

- SE Services – The nature of the service itself requires an individualized approach based on the needs of an eligible individual. SE services are ongoing support services, including customized employment, and other appropriate services needed to support an individual with a most significant disability to achieve and maintain competitive integrated employment. SE services include customized employment and IPS. Services are provided by CRPs. MVR can provide up to 24 months of community-based job training.
- Job Placement Services – These services involve specialists who identify and cultivate job placement possibilities in the community. These services offer short-term follow-up support and can last between three and nine months. MVR counselors and CRPs provide job placement services.
- Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Services – Services include assessment and recommendations for accommodations, assistive devices and rehabilitation technology necessary to improve the quality of work and/or increase work productivity. MVR counselors assess the need and consult with Missouri Assistive Technology.
- Transition Services – Transition services assist eligible students and youth with disabilities to successfully prepare them for transitioning into postsecondary education, vocational training or integrated employment. Services can be provided by MVR and coordinated with the Office of Special Education, local school districts and CRPs. Services are provided for the duration of the case. Data indicated that one of the highest risk groups for TBI was ages 15 to 24.
- Employment Services Plus (ESP) – ESP is designed to assist an individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder-Adult (ASD-A), Brain Injury (BI), and/or Cultural Deafness/hard of hearing (D/HH) who has barriers that require additional supports to achieve a successful employment outcome. ESP provides augmentative services for clients whose disability-related needs exceed the level of support provided by traditional vocational rehabilitation services but does not merit consideration of SE services.
- Training Services – Services include college, occupational, vocational, customized, literacy, job readiness, disability-related skills training, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and work-based learning experiences.

C. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and

From the comprehensive needs assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system:

- job search assistance
- labor market information
- resume assistance
- case management
- assessment
- individual planning and referral
- educational attainment
- work experiences
- apprenticeships
- customized employment
- support services such as uniforms, steel toed boots, equipment, etc.
- skills development and training
- computer skills training
- transportation assistance
- rehabilitation technology
- hiring and recruiting events

Individuals with disabilities expressed the need for a seamless workforce system. A system that allows for coordination, collaboration, and cooperation across agencies. They do not wish the inconvenience of navigating multiple entry points to obtain services. Through Missouri's Public Workforce System, the identified services above can be provided through co-locations among other service delivery avenues. MVR has several offices co-located in Missouri Job Centers.

When individuals with disabilities apply for vocational rehabilitation services and are not financially eligible, MVR refers them to other components of Missouri's workforce development system. Individuals providing the services are representatives from the Office of Workforce Development, Missouri Job Centers, and other WIOA program partners.

D. Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.

In assessing the needs of youth and students with disabilities, research from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition documents unsatisfactory outcomes achieved by youth with disabilities exiting school. They have difficulty accessing employment, education and community services. There is a need to bridge the information gap between schools, rehabilitation services, community agencies and employers.

Based on December 2020 core data from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary (DESE) Office of Special Education, the number of students, ages 16 to 21 and currently enrolled in school, with individualized education plans (IEPs) is 21,486. This number represents students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for pre-employment transition services or other transition services. MVR further disaggregated this data by MVR district office so that school districts were grouped together based on the MVR office that serves each school. Therefore, the local MVR office knows the specific number of students, ages 16 to 21 with IEPs, for each of the schools that they serve.

MVR has received feedback from many stakeholders such as consumers, parents, school districts and employers regarding the need for services for youth and students with disabilities. There are limited competitive integrated employment opportunities for this population especially in rural areas.

MVR is answering these pre-employment transition needs of eligible or potentially eligible students with multiple strategies that supplement the MVR transition services that have traditionally been provided by its staff and partners. These strategies include summer work experience programs coordinated with CRPs and similar programs with CILs. The VR Summer Work Experience Program was developed in partnership with CRPs. MVR offers paid summer work experience opportunities in integrated settings for potentially eligible or VR-eligible students with disabilities. In addition to working, the students receive training in soft skills. The CIL Summer Pre-Employment Transition Services Program provide potentially eligible or VR-eligible students with disabilities access to job exploration activities, workplace readiness training, social support and instruction on self-advocacy including peer mentoring. MVR collaborated with businesses and school districts to provide services through these programs.

MVR is contracting with the University of Missouri, College of Education and Human Development, to assist with the provision of pre-employment transition services through regional pre-employment specialists. The university hired 47 pre-employment transition services specialists, all certified educational professionals, to work in collaboration with local education agencies (LEAs) and MVR to provide statewide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services. Eight of the 47 provide pre-employment transition services in the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled.

MVR is working on a pilot program designed to provide peer mentoring for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems and homeless or housing insecure youth. The pilot includes a focus on increasing family engagement. MVR is working with local juvenile justice centers the family court system and the Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division to provide services for this underserved population. Through these programs, MVR is partnering with CILs, the University of Missouri's College of Education and Human Development, Missouri State University, the Office of Workforce Development and an employer mentor.

MVR funds deaf/hard of hearing students to attend the Rochester Institute of Technology for a pre-employment transition services camp. MVR is also working with Wonderland Camp, of Rocky Mount, on an internship program for both students and youth with disabilities. MVR sponsors students and youth with disabilities to participate in the Governor's Council on Disability Missouri Youth Leadership Forum that focuses on leadership, citizenship, and social and career development skills. It also participates in the council's Virtual Leadership Forum. MVR is utilizing its business services specialists to work with employers on creating work experiences for youth and students with disabilities. And, it is collaborating with its WIOA partners in providing seamless, coordinated services to youth and students with disabilities.

Research verifies that pathways from school to work or secondary to postsecondary education can be more difficult for individuals with disabilities; therefore, the need for transition career services and pre-employment transition services is great.

DESE reports that for 2021-2022 school year, the percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been:

- enrolled in higher education is 21.9%.
- enrolled in higher education or competitively employed is 52.8%.

This data indicates that there is a need for improved transition services.

MVR surveyed statewide staff to gather information on practices and services for youth with disabilities. Among the findings, staff reported that some of the barriers that youth with disabilities face in obtaining successful employment are a lack of work exposure or work experiences, transportation issues, the absence of parent/family involvement or follow through from parents and students. Feedback indicated that the number of vocational rehabilitation staff was not adequate to serve the number of students.

Feedback has shown that not all school districts are open to enhancing transition services. MVR is utilizing its transition counselors to forge inroads with school districts statewide. It is also working with the University of Missouri, College of Education and Human Development, through pre-employment services to access all school districts including ones that historically have been hesitant in enhancing transition services. Additional strategies include an MVR-developed YouTube video, which can be shared with parents and students before, during or after IEP meetings. MVR counselors are present at IEP meetings when invited in order to coordinate services that are a part of the VR individualized plan for employment (IPE). MVR conducted a statewide training for MVR staff on outreach, joint service provision and coordination of IEP/IPE services. New MVR counselor training includes a special education transition coordinator who provides training on IEP development and transition services.

The DESE Graduation Handbook and DESE Transition Agreement include three work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities on an IEP and are coordinated with special education. Students receive high school credit. These three experiences are the COOP Program, employer-based transition training/Project Search for students with most significant disabilities, and unpaid internships.

Any workforce development boards that have youth committees have an MVR representative. MVR is part of the St. Louis County Youth Interagency Partnership, comprised of any organization serving youth

in St. Louis County, which was formed to coordinate services so that no youth will fall through the cracks between agencies.

MVR chairs the WIOA Youth Services subcommittee, which is comprised of representatives from the core, combined state plan, and required partners as well as other agencies and organizations. This subcommittee focuses on cross-agency trainings and explores and develops service braiding.

(2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

a) Establish new CRPs: MVR does not believe that there is a need to establish new CRPs.

b) Expand/develop current network of CRPs: MVR does not believe that there is a need to expand or develop the current network of CRPs.

c) Improve CRPs: MVR has identified the following strategies to improve CRPs within the state:

- The CRP-MVR steering committee will continue to make recommendations to improve services.
- Minimum training requirements for CRP staff members have been developed and incorporated into the CRP-MVR Agreement. The CRP-MVR Steering Committee will monitor implementation of these new requirements and make recommendations as necessary.
- MVR held four in-person and one virtual CRP/MVR summits statewide. MVR staff and CRP direct services staff attended the meetings. The purpose of the summits was to enhance communication, promote partnering, share best practices, gather feedback and provide joint training. MVR plans to host the summits on an annual basis.

(c) Goals, Priorities, and Strategies. Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

(1) Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and

MVR and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) jointly developed and agreed upon the agency's goals and priorities for the upcoming program year while also taking into consideration any revisions for future goals and priorities.

(2) Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—

- (A) **Support innovation and expansion activities;**
- (B) **Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;**
- (C) **Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and**
- (D) **Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.**

MVR's goals and priorities are based on information from the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, the performance accountability measures, and other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program. MVR and the SRC developed strategies to achieve the goals and priorities.

(1) The Most Recent Comprehensive Statewide Assessment, Including any Updates

In developing its goals and priorities, MVR analyzed information and results obtained from the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). The assessment includes feedback from the SRC, public hearings and consumer satisfaction surveys. This information is given to the administrative and strategic teams to develop strategies. MVR utilizes a variety of teams to assist with the development and implementation of many of the strategies identified in this section. Team members include MVR staff, management, providers, former consumers and school personnel. MVR's Management Team monitors outcomes and progress toward goals on a regular basis. To illustrate MVR's use of the CSNA, one area revealed that youth with disabilities need guidance with job exploration, work-based learning experiences, exploring opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive or postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training and instruction in self-advocacy. Findings indicate that this population has difficulty accessing employment, education and community services, and that youth need to develop the skills necessary to prepare for, obtain, retain or advance in competitive, integrated employment. MVR has made it a priority to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities as evidenced in the setting of goals and objectives in its current state plan.

(2) The State's Performance Under the Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA

MVR reviewed the requirements for the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA when goals, priorities, and strategies were in development. Available data and performance were taken into consideration. MVR utilized the performance indicators and its previous performance when setting its goals.

Under WIOA, MVR and the Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind together determine and submit their expected levels of performance as well as negotiate levels of performance with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Until recently, VR agencies were required to only report an expected level of performance and negotiate a performance level for measurable skills gain (MSG). Missouri estimated its expected MSG level of performance for PY 2020 would be 18.0% and 18.5% for PY 2021. The agencies negotiated 20.0% for PY 2020 and 20.5% for PY 2021. MVR's actual level of performance

for MSG in PY 2020 was 77.9% and 74.8% in PY 2021. MVR's performance rate more than tripled its expected and negotiated levels.

In 2022, agencies were required to submit expected levels of performance and negotiate performance levels for the first five indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023. These levels are reported below along with MVR's actual levels of performance for PY 2022. Because PY 2023 has not ended, actual levels are not available at this time (*NA).

Indicator 1 - Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit

Expected Levels:	PY 2022: 58.8%	PY 2023: 58.8%
Negotiated Levels:	PY 2022: 58.8%	PY 2023: 60.0%
Actual Levels:	PY 2022: 65.96%	PY 2023: *NA

Indicator 2 - Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit

Expected Levels:	PY 2022: 54.5%	PY 2023: 54.5%
Negotiated Levels:	PY 2022: 54.5%	PY 2023: 55.0%
Actual Levels:	PY 2022: 63.54%	PY 2023: *NA

Indicator 3 - Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit

Expected Levels:	PY 2022: \$5,435	PY 2023: \$5,435
Negotiated Levels:	PY 2022: \$5,450	PY 2023: \$5,550
Actual Levels:	PY 2022: \$5,590	PY 2023: *NA

Indicator 4 - Credential Attainment Rate

Expected Levels:	PY 2022: 24.0%	PY 2023: 24.0%
Negotiated Levels:	PY 2022: 28.0%	PY 2023: 29.0%
Actual Levels:	PY 2022: 64%	PY 2023: *NA

Indicator 5 - Measurable Skill Gains

Expected Levels:	PY 2022: 65.0	PY 2023: 65.0
Negotiated Levels:	PY 2022: 77.9%	PY 2023: 78.0%
Actual Levels:	PY 2022: 73.26%	PY 2023: *NA

MVR exceeded its expected and negotiated levels of performance for indicators 1, 2, 3, and 4. MVR will continue to evaluate the levels of MSG for individuals with disabilities and determine appropriate next actions.

On February 23, 2024, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education issued a final rule defining the sixth performance indicator, Effectiveness in Serving Employers, as "Retention with the Same Employer." The rule is effective March 25, 2024. As of this writing, complete implementation guidance has yet to be released.

(3) Other Available Information on the Operation and Effectiveness of the VR Program, Including Any Reports Received from the State Rehabilitation Council and Findings and Recommendations from Monitoring Activities Conducted Under Section 107.

Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program utilized in the development of the goals and priorities are:

- SRC input and recommendations
- RSA monitoring feedback from Section 107 Monitoring Reviews
- other sources, e.g., CRPs' legislative input, consumer satisfaction surveys, input from the Client Assistance Program and public hearings

Goals, Priorities, and Strategies

The goals and priorities for the VR and Supported Employment programs are listed below. The strategies to achieve the goals and priorities are part of methods used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

VR Program

Goal 1: Increase the number of participants receiving training services.

Target: Increase the number of participants receiving training services by 2.5% per program year.

Baseline data: PY 2021: 3,260 PY 2022: 3,499

Objective: Maximize the potential of those we serve.

Strategies:

1. Emphasize career pathways, ensuring integration in staff training.
2. Expand middle skills pilot program for training services in collaboration with the Office of Workforce Development and Career and Technical Education.
3. Simplify postsecondary training authorization process.

Goal 2: Increase the number of students with disabilities who access VR services.

Target: Increase the number of students with disabilities accessing VR services by 1.5% per program year.

Baseline data: PY 2021: 20,606 PY 2022: 20,794

Objective: Make pre-employment transition services and traditional VR services available to Missouri students with disabilities.

Strategies:

1. Increase number of high schools that VR and its providers engage.
2. Expand pre-employment transition services to justice and foster care involved and homeless or housing insecure students with disabilities through a pilot program.
3. Develop regional interagency partnerships focused on agencies serving youth.
4. Coordinate services with workforce development programs that target youth.

Goal 3: Strengthen relationships with employers across Missouri.

Target: Increase the number of employers served and the number of services provided by 1.5% per program year.

Baseline: MVR developed a system to capture employer services. In PY 2022, 3,075 employers were served 16,481 services.

Objective: Provide more opportunities to those we serve.

Strategies:

1. Connect candidates to employers recruiting for apprenticeship opportunities.
2. Identify and connect with businesses offering career pathways paying above median wage.
3. Expand Nexus groups across the state to strengthen WIOA partnerships and gain access to employers.
4. Utilize the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to connect candidates to employers.

MVR's goals, priorities, and strategies for the distribution of funds from section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services are:

Goal 1: Maintain high quality supported employment services.

Target: Increase or maintain the number of annual CRP summits.

Baseline data: PY 2021: four CRP summits PY 2022: four CRP summits

Strategies:

1. Identify and share best case practices around providing supported employment services.

2. Continue to provide training through annual CRP Summits.

Goal 2: Implement collaborative programs to promote braiding of services within the statewide workforce development system.

Target: Increase or maintain the number of agreements with Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers providing IPS services per program year.

Baseline data: PY 2021: 26 PY 2022: 33

Strategies:

1. Continue to provide and expand IPS services statewide in partnership with the Department of Mental Health-Behavioral Health Division.

2. MVR entered into contract with the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston to develop a plan for implementing customized employment services across Missouri.

The above strategies will also support innovation and expansion activities, aid in overcoming barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services, improve and expand services for students with disabilities, and improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs.

(A) Support innovation and expansion activities;

MVR continues to support innovation and expansion activities through its commitment to supported employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Multiple ad hoc teams composed of MVR and CRP staff work together developing new ideas and designing processes to successfully support and implement those new ideas. A CRP-MVR team was created to assess service overlap between the Department of Mental Health's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) and CRPs. The team identified ways to braid services.

MVR is also supporting innovation and expansion activities through new pilots in several areas such as apprenticeships and peer mentoring for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems. Homeless and housing insecure youths are included in these programs. Through these pilots, MVR is collaborating with numerous partners such as the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, Centers for Independent Living, rehabilitation service providers, University of Missouri, Missouri State University, Office of Workforce Development, and employers. Braiding services through these collaborations opens opportunities to reach more Missourians with disabilities desiring to work.

MVR utilizes innovation and expansion funds to support activities of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council pursuant to 34 CFR section §361.35.

(B) Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;

MVR developed the strategies below to overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the VR and supported employment services programs.

MVR employs a diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant to assist with improving services to underserved populations, developing training programs, and establishing outreach strategies for individuals from diverse cultures. The consultant presents diversity training sessions for all MVR office staff and during new counselor training. The consultant also leads the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team comprised of VR management, VR district office staff and Disability Determination staff. This team is dedicated to acknowledging diversity barriers and developing training to address these issues. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team developed a diversity and inclusion recruitment plan for the agency. Civility training is another strategy utilized to overcome these barriers as well as staff training opportunities on cultural competency that cover aspects of diversity.

To address barriers to services for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems, along with homeless and housing in-secure youths, MVR created a pilot project to provide peer mentoring.

MVR developed Employment Services Plus to assist individuals with autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury or deafness/hearing loss who require additional supports to reach successful outcomes.

MVR works with DMH-DD and community rehabilitation programs to provide a customized employment pilot program for individuals who have not been able to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment. Some of the individuals in the program have encountered barriers to traditional VR services. The pilot promotes the specific abilities of the individual and identifies effective strategies to meet employer needs.

- (C) Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and**

The methods to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services) are included in MVR's goals, priorities and strategies. Goal 2 is devoted to increasing the number of students with disabilities who access VR services. With the objective of making pre-employment transition services and traditional VR services available to Missouri students with disabilities, the following strategies were developed:

1. Increase number of high schools that VR and its providers engage.

2. Expand pre-employment transition services to justice and foster care involved and homeless or housing insecure students with disabilities through a pilot program.
3. Develop regional interagency partnerships focused on agencies serving youth.
4. Coordinate services with workforce development programs that target youth.

(D) Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.

Below are additional methods and strategies to expand services and improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.

Assistive Technology Services and Devices

The following strategies will be utilized to ensure a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis:

1. MVR will work jointly with CRPs and other partnering agencies, including WIOA partners, to develop and sponsor on-going training in rehabilitation technology services.
2. At any time during the rehabilitation process, MVR's statewide rehabilitation technology specialists will provide technical assistance to MVR counselors.
3. MVR has developed an ad hoc rehabilitation technology team to help clients meet their rehabilitation technology needs.
4. MVR staff will participate in activities, training programs and conferences sponsored by Missouri Assistive Technology.
5. MVR utilizes several rehabilitation technology projects, located at various Centers for Independent Living statewide, which have demonstration centers for exploring, reviewing and demonstrating various rehabilitation technology devices, services and resources.
6. MVR will continue to work with the rehabilitation technology needs of farm operators with disabilities and consult with staff statewide.
7. Biannually, MVR's vocational rehabilitation counselors for the deaf gather for training and to discuss new strategies, resources and issues for deaf and hard of hearing clients. MVR's assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing services plans and organizes the training.

8. MVR's assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing services will continue providing statewide support for staff with assistive technology services for clients with hearing impairments.

Outreach Strategies to Serve Individuals with Disabilities Who are Minorities, Most Significantly Disabled, and Unserved or Underserved

In order to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program, outreach procedures have been developed.

1. MVR will recruit rehabilitation counselors from culturally diverse backgrounds to better serve individuals with significant disabilities from underserved populations.
2. MVR will utilize state-contracted interpreters to reduce communication barriers.
3. MVR will continue to translate brochures in Spanish for the Hispanic community.
4. MVR's diversity consultant will provide cultural diversity training to MVR staff and deliver training to each MVR office. In addition, the consultant will continue to lead the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team, which includes MVR staff.

Improving Community Rehabilitation Programs

In order to achieve its goals and priorities, MVR developed strategies to improve community rehabilitation programs in Missouri. MVR will continue to provide training through annual CRP Summits. In addition, MVR and CRP staffs offer input on service delivery processes during partnering meetings and develop action plans to improve those processes. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to review progress on these processes, service delivery and to discuss current and future issues warranting attention. This effort, along with joint training activities, is beneficial to improving both the CRP and MVR programs.

Improving the State's Performance with Respect to the Performance Accountability Measures

MVR developed strategies to improve the agency's performance with regard to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. With staff input, MVR created Program Year Priorities to align with the performance accountability measures. The priorities focus on individuals with disabilities achieving long-term retention and higher wages by (1) utilizing a career pathways approach to vocational planning, promoting opportunities to access postsecondary training services, (3) serving potentially eligible students, (4) engaging in continuous outreach efforts, (5) documenting the provision of VR services accurately and timely, and (6) creating employment opportunities through strong community partnerships.

These priorities guided the development of the strategies listed below.

1. The MVR Business Team is strengthening relationships with employers across Missouri by
 - connecting candidates to employers recruiting for apprenticeship opportunities;
 - identifying and connecting with businesses offering career pathways paying above median wage;
 - expanding Nexus groups across the state to strengthen WIOA partnerships and gain access to employers; and
 - utilizing the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to connect candidates to employers.

2. Training Initiatives

MVR focuses training efforts on capturing the services it provides in its case management system for accurate reporting to the Rehabilitation Services Administration and to reflect staff's work to improve data entry performance.

3. Usage of Data

- MVR is utilizing a data interface for secondary education information to assist in capturing all education data.
- MVR is analyzing a data interface to capture postsecondary data.
- MVR's data interface with the state's Unemployment Insurance wage allows access to post wage data.
- MVR tailors its internal data management reports to generate information on its performance with regard to section 116 of WIOA.

4. Expanding work-based learning opportunities to include progressive employment.

MVR is expanding its work-based services to include the progressive employment model. This model provides participants paid work experiences in a supportive environment by offering supports to both the participant and the employer. It utilizes labor market information to assure the vocational goal is in a stable and/or growing occupation, is above minimum wage, and has the potential for career pathways and credential attainment. In addition to the paid work experience, this model continues to support the participant and help with job development, placement and retention services.

MVR is collaborating, cooperating and coordinating with WIOA partners to work on methods to align data systems, share referrals and determine common intake practices. It reviews the performance of the state with respect to the performance accountability measures with WIOA partners to ensure measures are consistent throughout the core programs. Efforts are directed at cross training to educate partner staff on each other's programs. MVR is analyzing methods to work with partners on braided services among programs.

MVR created strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities. It continues to work with the Office of Workforce Development (OWD), which provides the statewide workforce development system services through the Missouri Job Centers in 13 workforce regions. MVR staff serves as active members on 12 local workforce development boards.

Through Memoranda of Understanding, MVR is an important referral source both from and to job center partners for individuals with disabilities. MVR counselors visit various Missouri Job Centers (both full service sites and satellites) frequently to provide services to individuals in a timely fashion. MVR works with partners in learning what services are available and how to capitalize on resources and processes already in place. Some MVR staff members are co-located in the job centers.

MVR works with OWDD as both are members of the WIOA Steering Committee and members of all WIOA subcommittees consisting of representation from partner programs. Many subcommittees, consisting of members from all of the partner programs, are meeting and developing methods to meet individuals' needs. MVR is working closely with all of the WIOA partners in order to avoid duplication of services and provide the best services possible for consumers.

OWDD hosts the Missouri Statewide Partnering Meeting quarterly. MVR attends these meetings that include members of the Missouri Public Workforce System, including the executive directors of the job centers, and other stakeholders.

(d) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals. For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

(1) Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs;

Strategies that contributed to the achievement of the PY 2022 Goals and Priorities established by MVR and the State Rehabilitation Council were as follows:

Goal 1: Increase the number of participants receiving training services.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal met.

The number of participants receiving training services during:

PY 2021: 3,260 PY 2022: 3,499

Strategies:

1. Emphasize career pathways, ensuring integration in staff training.

MVR has incorporated numerous resources on career pathways into staff training. The training team has worked with other WIOA partners and training facilities to deliver current information and best-case practices for MVR staff to utilize. Monthly and year-end reports were created to reflect staff progress in this area.

2. Expand middle skills pilot program for training services in collaboration with the Office of Workforce Development and Career and Technical Education.

The middle skills pilot program began in 2021 and has grown from one to five sites. The first year, seven participants completed the program with 19 completing this past year. Middle skills jobs require more education and training than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree.

3. Simplify postsecondary training authorization process.

MVR set an established rate of funding for training services. The institution of a statewide rate simplifies the postsecondary training authorization process and allows for the inclusion of more postsecondary institutions.

Goal 2: Increase the number of students with disabilities who access VR services.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal met.

The number of students with disabilities who access VR services during:
PY 2021: 20,606 PY 2022: 20,794

Strategies:

1. Increase the number of high schools that VR and its providers engage.

MVR has a VR counselor assigned to each of the 556 public high schools in Missouri. MVR contracts with the University of Missouri to provide pre-employment transition services to potentially eligible students with disabilities. This arrangement has increased MVR's presence in the secondary school system. MVR's Summer Work Experience is a paid, six-week, 20-hours-per-week work-based learning experience with supports in a competitive, integrated setting for students with disabilities. The program is a collaboration between MVR, high schools, community rehabilitation providers (CRPs), and employers. Through this program, MVR and its providers have increased their engagement with high schools.

2. Expand pre-employment transition services to justice and foster care involved and homeless or housing insecure students with disabilities in pilot locations.

MVR is piloting a peer mentoring program to serve students with disabilities in foster care and in the justice system around the state. Homeless or housing insecure youth with disabilities are also served through this pilot. The first pilot began in November 2019 and has expanded to five locations.

3. Develop regional interagency partnerships focused on agencies serving youth.

The Missouri Interagency Transition Team was formed through the Office of Special Education and includes members representing state-level agencies, including MVR, across Missouri who have an interest in improving postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities.

4. Coordinate services with workforce development programs that target youth.

MVR is piloting a progressive work-based learning program that promotes middle skills. Through this program, MVR partners with CRPs and Missouri Job Centers that provide WIOA services. Participants are enrolled in a career and technical education program and receive wrap-around supports from MVR, job centers, and CRPs. They receive paid work experiences related to training, which can lead to employment utilizing technical skills in a stable industry at a higher median wage with the opportunity for future career growth and credential attainment.

Goal 3: Strengthen relationships with employers across Missouri.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal met.

MVR developed a process within its case management system to capture employer services. In PY 2022, 3,075 employers were served and were provided 16,481 services.

Strategies:

1. Connect candidates to employers recruiting for apprenticeship opportunities.

MVR continues to connect clients with employers providing apprenticeship opportunities. The MVR Business Services team works directly with employers as well as WIOA partners to share the costs of the training.

2. Identify and connect with businesses offering career pathways paying above median wage.

MVR's Business Services representatives are connecting with employers paying \$15.00 an hour or higher.

3. Expand Nexus groups across the state to strengthen WIOA partnerships and gain access to employers.

Nexus groups are employment collaboratives that include MVR, WIOA partner agencies, and employers. The groups focus on connecting candidates with barriers to employment to business partners through meetings, planned events, and panel discussions. There are six active Nexus groups statewide. The Business Services team is working with its partners, such as the Family Support Division and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, to create new groups and organize monthly meetings.

4. Utilize the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to connect candidates to employers.

The Business Services team continues to utilize TAP and provided TAP-focused trainings for staff in order to increase participation. The team has improved marketing efforts through presentations at new counselor trainings, discussions at staff meetings, and participation in the VR/CRP summits.

PY 2022 Goals for the Supported Employment Program and strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals were as follows:

Goal 1: Maintain high quality supported employment services.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal met.

Strategies:

1. Identify and share best case practices around providing supported employment services.

MVR partners with two divisions of the Department of Mental Health to provide the supported employment services of Individual Placement Support (IPS) and customized employment. Through these partnerships, MVR identifies and shares best case practices. MVR works with CRPs to provide supported employment services. District offices meet with local CRPs to outline joint activities. MVR and CRP staff offer input on service delivery processes and develop action plans to improve those processes.

2. Continue to provide training through annual CRP Summits.

MVR held four virtual VR/CRP summits during 2021 and 2022. In 2023, the summits returned to in-person meetings with four held statewide and an added virtual option.

Goal 2: Implement collaborative programs to promote braiding of services within the statewide workforce development system.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal met.

Strategies:

1. Continue to provide and expand IPS services statewide in partnership with the Department of Mental Health-Behavioral Health Division.

MVR partners with the Department of Mental Health-Behavioral Health Division to provide IPS services to individuals with severe and persistent mental illness through 33 IPS locations statewide.

2. MVR entered into contract with the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston to develop a plan for implementing customized employment services across Missouri.

MVR partners with the Department of Mental Health-Developmental Disabilities Division to deliver customized employment services that promote specific abilities of individuals with disabilities and meets employers' needs through flexible strategies. Currently there are two active pilot sites.

(2) Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

Under WIOA, MVR and the Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind together determine and submit their expected levels of performance as well as negotiate levels of performance with Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Until recently, VR agencies were required to only report an expected level of performance and negotiate a performance level for measurable skills gain (MSG). Missouri estimated its expected MSG level of performance for PY 2020 would be 18.0% and 18.5% for PY 2021. The agencies negotiated 20.0% for PY 2020 and 20.5% for PY 2021. MVR's actual level of performance for MSG in PY 2020 was 77.9% and 74.8% in PY 2021. MVR's performance rate more than tripled its expected and negotiated levels.

In 2022, agencies were required to submit expected levels of performance and negotiate performance levels for the first five indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023. These levels are reported below along with MVR's actual levels of performance for PY 2022. Because PY 2023 has not ended, actual levels are not available at this time (*NA).

Indicator 1 - Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit

Expected Levels:	PY 2022: 58.8%	PY 2023: 58.8%
Negotiated Levels:	PY 2022: 58.8%	PY 2023: 60.0%
Actual Levels:	PY 2022: 65.96%	PY 2023: *NA

Indicator 2 - Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit

Expected Levels:	PY 2022: 54.5%	PY 2023: 54.5%
Negotiated Levels:	PY 2022: 54.5%	PY 2023: 55.0%
Actual Levels:	PY 2022: 63.54%	PY 2023: *NA

Indicator 3 - Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit

Expected Levels:	PY 2022: \$5,435	PY 2023: \$5,435
Negotiated Levels:	PY 2022: \$5,450	PY 2023: \$5,550
Actual Levels:	PY 2022: \$5,590	PY 2023: *NA

Indicator 4 - Credential Attainment Rate

Expected Levels:	PY 2022: 24.0%	PY 2023: 24.0%
Negotiated Levels:	PY 2022: 28.0%	PY 2023: 29.0%
Actual Levels:	PY 2022: 64%	PY 2023: *NA

Indicator 5 - Measurable Skill Gains

Expected Levels:	PY 2022: 65.0	PY 2023: 65.0
Negotiated Levels:	PY 2022: 77.9%	PY 2023: 78.0%

Actual Levels: PY 2022: 73.26% PY 2023: *NA

MVR exceeded its expected and negotiated levels of performance for indicators 1, 2, 3, and 4.

To address factors that impeded MVR's performance on Indicator 5 – Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) and to assure it meets PY 2023's negotiated level and performance measures for PYs 2024 and 2025, MVR will encourage counselors to increase guidance and counseling with clients participating in training programs. MVR will also connect clients to the accessibility offices at their training program sites when appropriate. MVR will continue to ensure the data entered for MSG is accurate and timely. MVR will continue to evaluate the levels of MSG for individuals with disabilities and determine appropriate next actions.

On February 23, 2024, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education issued a final rule defining the sixth performance indicator, Effectiveness in Serving Employers, as "Retention with the Same Employer." The rule is effective March 25, 2024. As of this writing, complete implementation guidance has yet to be released.

(3) The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).

MVR continues to support innovation and expansion activities through its commitment to supported employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Multiple ad hoc teams composed of MVR and CRP staff work together developing new ideas and designing processes to successfully support and implement those new ideas. A CRP-MVR team was created to assess service overlap between the Department of Mental Health's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) and CRPs. The team identified ways to braid services to pilot customized employment (CE) as a new service category in Missouri. In addition, this team mapped out a strategic training plan to include both on-and off-site technical assistance.

MVR is also supporting innovation and expansion activities through new pilots in several areas such as apprenticeships and peer mentoring for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems and homeless and housing insecure youth. Through these pilots, MVR is collaborating with numerous partners such as the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, CILs, CRPs, University of Missouri, Missouri State University, Office of Workforce Development, and employers. Braiding services through these collaborations opens opportunities to reach more Missourians with disabilities desiring to work.

MVR utilized Section 110 funds for the SRC and funds for the SILC contracted activities. These funds were primarily used to pay for council members' travel, meeting expenses, and supplies, and to operate the SILC. MVR spent \$27,616.56 from the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2021 VR grant in PY 2022 on the SILC contract and will spend at least \$26,260 from the FFY 2022 VR grant on the SILC contract in PY 2023. MVR has already spent \$7,939.12. The rest was encumbered for the August and September 2023 SILC invoices.

(e) Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.

(1) Acceptance of title VI funds:

(A) ☒ VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

(B) ☐ VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

(2) If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.

The state plan goals and priorities for the distribution of funds from section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services are:

Goal 1: Maintain high quality supported employment services.

Target: Increase or maintain the number of annual CRP summits.

Baseline data: PY 2021: four CRP summits PY 2022: four CRP summits

Strategies:

1. Identify and share best case practices around providing supported employment services.

2. Continue to provide training through annual CRP Summits.

Goal 2: Implement collaborative programs to promote braiding of services within the statewide workforce development system.

Target: Increase or maintain the number of agreements with Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers providing IPS services per program year.

Baseline data: PY 2021: 26 PY 2022: 33

Strategies:

1. Continue to provide and expand IPS services statewide in partnership with the Department of Mental Health-Behavioral Health Division.

2. MVR entered into contract with the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston to develop a plan for implementing customized employment services across Missouri.

Title VI funds are utilized for supported employment services through a fee-for-service as established in MVR's supported employment cost analysis. Title I funds are also utilized for the provision of supported employment services.

MVR estimates that the number of eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities who will receive supported employment services during FFY 2025 is 6,745. MVR estimates that it will spend Title I and Title VI funds of \$20,036,980 in FFY 2025 on supported employment services. These services will be provided through nonprofit, accredited CRPs.

With funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, MVR focuses on delivering services that result in competitive, integrated employment. It can provide or arrange for extended services for a period not to exceed four years. However, to leverage funding, it relies on community rehabilitation providers and community organizations for the provision of supported employment services, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities or until the youth turns 25 years of age, whichever comes first. These services and activities may include job coaching, job supports (both on and off the job), guidance and counseling, retention services, resources for benefits counseling, information and referral, and employer consultation.

To increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities, MVR leverages other public and private funds through its continued work the DMH-DD division in utilizing home and community-based waivers. It will continue to work closely with the Missouri Department of Social Services MOHealthNet Division and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities divisions to ensure that youth with the most significant disabilities are receiving extended services.

(3) Supported employment services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.

MVR maintains cooperative, written agreements with nonprofit, private CRPs to provide services on a fee-for-service basis. All supported employment (SE) fees authorized by MVR are a uniform, flat rate as recommended by the RSA 107 Monitoring Review.

SE on-the-job support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, are provided with SE grant dollars only after job placement. MVR routinely expends its SE grant allotment after which Title I funds are utilized.

Other services, which support individuals seeking supported employment, that lead up to job placement, must be paid with Title I funds. These may include:

- discovery and exploration;

- survey of businesses and assurance of potential community-based exploration, assessments and work sites suited to the needs of the clients;
- analysis of all relevant job-related variables, (e.g., transportation, job restructuring, tax credit for employers, etc.);
- development of an internal advocacy system;
- provision of long-term, extended services support with the client or employer a minimum of twice per month; and
- customized employment for individuals and employers.

MVR is committed to providing greater access to SE services. The scope of SE services reaches throughout the state. All counties in Missouri are being served by CRPs that provide SE services.

MVR district offices meet with local CRPs to outline joint activities to assist mutual consumers reach employment outcomes. MVR and CRP staffs both offer input on service delivery processes during partnering meetings and develop action plans to improve those processes. Other collaborative activities involve joint training programs.

One of the methods that MVR uses to continuously improve SE services and the service delivery process is through the use of a strategic team. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to improve services, review feedback, monitor progress and to discuss current and future issues warranting attention.

MVR and the CRPs developed an outcome-based service model that emphasizes quality employment outcomes and retention.

DMH-BH and MVR have been working to increase access to evidence-based supported employment, also known as IPS, for adults with serious mental illnesses who are interested in improving their work lives. Missouri has 33 Community Mental Health Centers participating in this implementation collaborative. DMH and MVR are implementing IPS for youth with serious mental illnesses in several sites.

Fifty (50) percent of MVR's SE grant allotment must be reserved and expended on the provision of SE services, including extended services, to youth with the most significant disabilities. MVR can provide up to 24 months of SE on-the-job supports after placement and may extend services, if necessary.

Extended services are provided after the provision of supported employment and when job coaching falls below 10 percent. MVR utilizes CRPs or identified long-term providers for the provision of extended services that continue after case closure. This includes but is not limited to, at minimum, two contacts with the consumer each month. Extended services may be provided to youth with most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four years, or until the individual turns 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth, whichever comes first. MVR utilizes CRPs or identified long-term providers for the provision of extended services for youth with most significant disabilities that continue after case closure to support the consumer's needs.

Once a supported employment case is closed, MVR no longer funds extended services. The CRP or other identified provider is responsible for securing long-term funding.

(4) Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR § 363.4(a) and 34 CFR § 361.5(c)(19)(v).

MVR enters into cooperative written agreements with CRPs to provide services on a fee-for-service basis to individuals with disabilities, which includes youth with the most significant disabilities. Ad hoc teams composed of MVR and CRP staff worked together developing new ideas and designing processes to successfully support and implement those new ideas. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to improve services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities who are receiving supported employment services.

The CRPs provide SE services, which may include:

- job supports;
- job accommodations;
- workplace natural supports;
- facilitation of social inclusion in the workplace;
- provision of long-term, extended services support with the individual or employer a minimum of twice per month; and
- customized employment for individuals and employers.

MVR has signed cooperative agreements with 33 nonprofit Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers to provide IPS services, as well as extended services, to MVR clients including youth with serious mental illnesses in several sites.

(f) Annual Estimates. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

According to the 2021 American Community Survey, there are 897,969 Missourians that have some type of disability. The rate of disability in the state is 14.8 percent. This rate has remained stable from 2017 – 2021. Individuals within this population could be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services during FFY 2025.

(1) **Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—**

(A) VR Program; and

Through the MVR program in FFY 2025, the estimated number of individuals who are eligible for services, the estimated number of individuals expected to receive services, the estimated costs of services using Title I funds, and estimated number of eligible individuals who will not receive services are listed below. The estimated total number of individuals eligible for services and who will receive services under the VR Program is 23,165. MVR estimates that 4,736 individuals will not receive services due to the implementation of an order of selection.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
I	13,271	13,271	\$39,423,694	0
II	14,033	9,519	\$28,273,835	4,515
III	596	375	\$1,113,979	221

(B) Supported Employment Program.

Through the Supported Employment program in FFY 2025, the estimated number of individuals who are eligible for services, the estimated number of eligible individuals who are expected to receive services, the estimated costs of services using Title VI funds, and the estimated number of individuals who will not receive services are listed below. These estimates are included in the total estimates in (f)(1)(A) above. MVR projects that the number of eligible individuals expected to receive services under the Supported Employment program is 6,745. This estimate is derived from the number of individuals who were authorized supported employment services and is based on a 5% increase from PY 2023.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
I	6,745	6,745	\$20,036,980	n/a

The estimated total costs of services using Title 1 and Title VI funds is \$68,811,508.

All estimates are based on historical data and are impacted by the state's budget reduction of MVR's spending authority of federal funds for case services. The reduction in the spending authority was effective July 1, 2024. The reduction to spend available federal funds in a given state fiscal year impacts the estimates in Priority Categories II and III. The \$15.5 million reduction requires MVR to implement an order of selection.

(g) Order of Selection.

[check box] The VR agency is **not** implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

[X] The VR agency is implementing an order of selection with one or more categories closed.

* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

Pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

(1) For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—

(A) The justification for the order;

The federal appropriation capacity for MVR was reduced by \$15.5 million for the SFY25 state budget appropriation. This appropriation line in the Missouri state budget contains the ability to spend any federal funding sources that include the VR Federal Grant funds and funds received from Social Security Administration (SSA) Program income. MVR does transfer program income funds to the State Independent Living Services Program. This transfer of funds does not have an impact on the MVR program's need to manage federal spending through an order of selection.

All non-federal funds passed in the state budget for case services are appropriated through a separate state appropriation line from federal spending authority. This appropriation includes state general revenue and interagency transfer with Missouri Department of Mental Health. This appropriation was not reduced and is at the same funding level as the previous state fiscal year, SFY 2024.

MVR continues to see a significant increase in new applicants entering the program, as well as a significant increase in new spending associated with serving those applicants. Applicant and expenditure projections for FFY25 estimate a shortage in federal spending authority making it necessary to implement an order of selection. An order of selection ensures current MVR participants with employment plans can be served without interruption through the management of the wait list for new applicants. Priority Category II: An individual with a significant disability and Priority Category III: An individual with a disability, as defined in section (g)(2)(B), will be closed on December 9, 2024.

MVR's plan to move out the order of selection is a continuation of advocacy in conjunction with its designated state agency to restore the federal funding appropriation capacity to the SFY24 level for this fiscal year and subsequent years. Since only federal funding appropriation capacity was reduced, MVR anticipates moving out of an order of selection should the capacity to spend available federal funds is restored.

- (B) **The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and**

The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities is based upon the eligible individual's placement in one of the following priority categories:

Priority Category I: An individual with the most significant disability as defined below.

Priority Category II: An individual with a significant disability as defined below.

Priority Category III: An individual with a disability as defined below.

Definitions:

Individual with the Most Significant Disability: An individual with a significant disability who is seriously limited in three or more of the following functional areas: self-care, communication, mobility, self-direction, work tolerance, work skills, and/or interpersonal skills.

Individual with a Significant Disability: An individual with a disability who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or two functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance and/or work skills;

a. whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and

b. who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, intellectual disability, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord conditions (including paraplegia and quadriplegia), sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

Individual with a disability: all other eligible individuals with a disability.

MVR serves eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities (Priority Category 1) first. Eligible individuals with significant disabilities (Priority Category 2) are served next, followed by eligible individuals with disabilities (Priority Category 3).

- (C) **The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.**

MVR's goal for serving eligible individuals in each priority category is to remove them from the waiting list and place them into services as funds become available. MVR will use the following procedures to manage waiting lists and assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral:

- 1) An eligible individual will be placed in the appropriate priority category and receive written notification of the assigned priority category. The eligible individual's date of application will be used to determine the order of services within a priority category.
- 2) Individuals will be notified of their right to appeal their category assignment.
- 3) An eligible individual's placement in a priority category may be changed under justifiable circumstances.
- 4) Rationale for placement will appear in the individual's case file.
- 5) The order of selection shall in no way affect the provision or authorization of diagnostic and evaluation services needed to determine eligibility.
- 6) The order of selection shall in no way affect the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who were receiving such services prior to being determined eligible for VR and were placed in a closed category.
- 7) Eligible individuals who are at immediate risk of losing employment and require specific services or equipment to maintain employment are not subject to the order of selection for only those specific services or equipment necessary to maintain employment.
- 8) Services authorized or provided to any eligible individual shall not be disrupted as a result of an order of selection or the closing of a priority category.
- 9) All funding arrangements for providing services, including any third-party arrangements and awards by MVR, shall be consistent with the order of selection. If any funding arrangements are inconsistent with the order of selection, MVR shall renegotiate these funding arrangements so that they are consistent with the order of selection.
- 10) Eligible individuals who are in a priority category that is not open, shall be provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, including counseling and referral for job placement, using appropriate modes of communication to assist them in preparing for, securing, retaining or

regaining employment. These individuals will also be referred to other appropriate federal and state programs, including the statewide workforce investment career centers.

11) Individuals being referred to appropriate programs, as mentioned above, shall be provided the following:

(a) a notice of the referral to the agency carrying out the program

(b) information identifying a specific point of contact within the agency to which the individual is being referred

(c) information and advice regarding the most suitable services to assist the individual to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment

MVR's projected timelines to reach an employment outcome varies significantly with each individual. It is estimated that the average number of months to reach an employment outcome for priority category I is approximately 30 months, priority category II is approximately 47 months, and priority category III is approximately 25 months.

(2) Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?

☒ Yes

☐ No

MVR elects to serve eligible individuals, regardless of the established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment. Eligible individuals who are at immediate risk of losing employment and require specific services or equipment to maintain employment are not subject to the order of selection for only those specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

(h) Waiver of Statewideness. The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable."

Not Applicable

(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the VR agency

will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

(1) Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—

- (A) The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;**
- (B) The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and**
- (C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.**

MVR developed a system of collecting and analyzing data annually to determine qualified personnel needs. The following information describes the data system utilized in determining personnel/personnel development; recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel; standards; requirements for vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC) positions; staff development activities; personnel to address individual communication needs; performance evaluation system; and coordination with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

To assist in determining the number of personnel employed to deliver vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, MVR annually reviews data from its case management system. This information includes the average daily census of individuals served and the number of new applications, individualized plans for employment, successful employment outcomes, and cases closed without a successful employment outcome. MVR's human resource section tracks the number of employees and their personnel categories.

The VRCs, district supervisory positions and clerical staff are directly involved in providing services for individuals with disabilities (8 district supervisors have a partial caseload). The number of individuals who had an open file with MVR as of June 30, 2023 was 13,298.

MVR's management team reviews each vacancy to determine if the position should be filled, relocated, or reclassified to a counselor position (if the position was a different one) based upon factors such as current need and expected population growth. On a regular basis, MVR evaluates caseload sizes, office workload, and staffing to maximize efficiency.

(A) (B) The Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services (OLARS) consists of the following sections: Disability Determination Services, Independent Living, Veterans Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). There are approximately 667 full-time employees in all four sections. This report will focus on the VR section. As of June 30, 2023, the breakdown of employees in the MVR Client Services section needed for service delivery is as follows:

135 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

10 Assistant District Supervisors

23 District Supervisors

57 Administrative Support Assistants

Administrative Staff:

1 Assistant Commissioner

4 Coordinators

1 Legal Counsel

5 Managers

6 Regional Managers

12 Directors

1 Human Resource Manager

16 Assistant Directors

1 Supervisor

1 Senior HR Analyst

2 HR Analysts

4 Case Quality Assurance Program Specialists

2 Fiscal Quality Assurance Program Specialists

5 Program Support Specialists

1 Senior Accounting Specialist

1 Executive Assistant

1 General Services Specialist

6 Business Specialists

(C) MVR anticipates approximately 20 VRCs per year will be needed to fill the vacancies from retirements, resignations, or terminations. The total number of VRCs needed for the next five years is approximately 100. MVR estimates that 10 assistant district supervisors, 10 district supervisors, 40 clerical support staff, and 25 administrative staff may be needed over the next five years to fill vacancies due to turnover and retirements.

An HR Analyst position has been created to cover additional need in the area of staff recruitment.

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	135	146	156
Assistant District Supervisors	9	11	21
District Supervisors	23	24	34
Administrative Support Assistants	57	57	97
Administrative Staff	70	70	95

(D) Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:

For PY 2025, the ratio of VR counselors to clients will be 1:98.

(E) Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:

According to the 2021 American Community Survey, 897,969 Missourians have reported that they have some type of disability. The rate of disability in the state is 14.8 percent. Individuals within this population could be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services in the next five years. MVR estimates that a yearly average of 28,745 individuals will be served in PY 2028, including individuals with the most significant disabilities. This estimate is the sum of the unique count of individuals who would have an open case and an application date within PY 2028. The estimate for PY 2028 also assumes that MVR's federal spending authority will be restored, and all categories will be open.

(2) Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:

(A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

There is one graduate rehabilitation counselor training program in Missouri. Maryville University in St. Louis, a private institution, offers a master's level degree program in rehabilitation counseling. Graduates of this program are ready to take the national Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification test and the state Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) test upon graduation. As of spring 2023, 24 students were enrolled, and 15 students are expected to graduate over the next academic year.

Maryville University began offering a program with a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling in September 1999; however, students are no longer being accepted as the university discontinued the program. All remaining students will complete their degrees in December 2024.

MVR is also working with other graduate counseling programs in Missouri and offers practicum and internship opportunities.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Maryville University	Rehabilitation Counseling Program	24	15

(B) The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

MVR works actively in recruiting new counselors with master's degrees in rehabilitation counseling or other related areas. As mentioned above, Missouri has one graduate level rehabilitation counseling program at Maryville University in St. Louis that, at this time, is not sufficient to produce the number of qualified rehabilitation professionals needed by MVR in all areas of the state. Many of the students are not willing to relocate from the St. Louis area. To address this issue, job announcements are sent to other postsecondary institutions that have rehabilitation counseling programs such as Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Emporia State University of Kansas, University of Arkansas, and Missouri universities that offer graduate-level counseling, social work and/or psychology programs.

MVR advertises all openings with the mocareers.mo.gov web page. Additionally, MVR advertises all openings on multiple online job search sites, including jobs.mo.gov, Indeed.com, LinkedIn, Handshake, and US Jobs among others.

MVR sends all job announcements to its state's historically black college, Lincoln University-Jefferson City, Missouri, as well as other historically black colleges such as Southern University-Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Langston University-Langston Oklahoma; and Mississippi State-Starkville, Mississippi.

MVR utilizes a diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant to assist with ongoing staff development activities and outreach to underserved populations around the state. The consultant and the MVR Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team works with MVR staff. The consultant presents training sessions every year for all staff in MVR's offices and training to new counselors. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team developed a diversity and inclusion recruitment plan for the agency.

As of June 30, 2023, approximately 17% of all professional staff and 20% of support staff with MVR were persons from diverse backgrounds. MVR also actively recruits individuals with disabilities. District supervisors and VRCs in MVR district offices receive all VRC job notices. Other disability organizations,

including CILs and CRPs, are consulted about recruiting persons with disabilities. Approximately 8% of all professional staff and 5% of support staff with MVR were individuals with disabilities.

MVR continues to offer non-paid as well as paid graduate internships for potential employees. MVR also considers candidates who have completed their necessary coursework and need to complete their internship requirement for open positions with the agency. During PY 2022, MVR provided one student with an unpaid internship experience to enable the student to complete graduate coursework. MVR is also open to job shadowing.

MVR is involved in a variety of activities to recruit and retain qualified rehabilitation personnel. Recruitment efforts are focused in part on maintaining good relationships with colleges and universities that offer degrees that meet state rule. MVR has a close working relationship with the graduate rehabilitation counselor program at Maryville University. MVR staff attends career fairs, serves as guest speakers, and makes regular contacts and visits to recruit students from the above master's level rehabilitation program. MVR representatives sit on the advisory board at Maryville. Staff development needs and future training/recruiting issues are discussed at these advisory meetings.

MVR provides a career ladder for counselors rewarding their success and tenure. MVR has a succession plan team that is working on recruitment plans and ideas to retain qualified personnel. Leadership development and capacity building is encouraged statewide through optional training, the Emerging Leaders program, tuition reimbursement, team membership, guidance from MVR's leadership director, and other activities. MVR encourages each staff member to view themselves as a leader in their current role.

MVR contracted with a marketing company to expand its counselor recruiting efforts through an awareness campaign consisting of social media, audio spots, and programmatic display. Through its redesigned website, MVR highlights VR employment opportunities and features employee videos, which promote the "Change You Can Make" awareness campaign. MVR also developed an HR analyst recruitment position to assist in supporting its recruitment and retention operations.

(C) Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:

- i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and**
- ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.**

i) MVR has a comprehensive program for in-service training and staff development for all positions. Staff at all levels will attend training in cultural diversity, sexual harassment prevention, and customer

service. Each new MVR employee completes a new employee orientation program in Bridge, VR's Learning Management System, which includes items on a hiring checklist. All new counselors attend New Counselor Training consisting of four monthly sessions. New counselors also receive online training through the Counselor Training and Resource Guide Program in Bridge and on-the-job training with a supervisor. New administrative support staff receive online training through the Administrative Training Guide Program in Bridge and on-the-job training with a supervisor. Supervisory staff and upper management personnel are required to attend training in leadership, supervision, hiring, interviewing, and other training offered through the state. MVR is invested in its leadership training program for supervisors and emerging leaders. Many MVR employees have graduated from, and some are currently participating in, the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute. MVR utilizes an internal training consultant who assists in leadership training.

All new counselor staff, together with their district supervisor, completes the New Counselor Training and Resource Guide Program in Bridge or New Administrative Staff Training Program in Bridge, which assists in the development and understanding of the rehabilitation field and the agency's goals, priorities, and responsibilities in serving individuals with disabilities under the federal/state VR program. MVR gathers ad hoc teams to address and evaluate specific staff development needs including topics such as leadership development, training manuals, training evaluations, new counselor orientations, and MI.

In addition to New Employee Orientation, new counseling staff receives training specific to vocational counseling/career development, job development/job placement, vocational services, and case management techniques from MVR staff.

MVR supports staff attendance on an annual basis to the Power Up Conference, which promotes the use and understanding of assistive technology and rehabilitation technology services and resources across the state. This conference is sponsored by the Missouri Assistive Technology Project (MoAT). MVR convenes an ad hoc assistive technology team when necessary, which assists the agency in staff development activities for assistive technology.

MVR has an assistant director of independent living/rehabilitation technology and an assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing/assistive technology. These staff members specialize in assistive technology related to independent living and deaf/hard of hearing services. They interact with MoAT and CILs across the state. They attend assistive technology services training and provide resources and information when appropriate to MVR staff. An MVR staff member is a representative on the MoAT Advisory Council.

MVR supports staff attendance at the National AgrAbility Conference. Additionally, statewide training has been provided on services and technology supports for agricultural careers.

Staff attend the Missouri Reentry Conference, which highlights best practices of state agencies and business/community/faith-based organizations serving justice-involved individuals. MVR participates in the Missouri Reentry Process.

MVR staff attend the annual Missouri and Illinois Behavioral Health Conference sponsored by the Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare. The coalition represents Missouri's not-for-profit community mental health centers, which participate in the implementation of Individual Placement and Support services in collaboration with MVR and the Department of Mental Health's Behavioral Health division.

Staff development needs are established in a number of ways. A survey of training needs is administered annually to all counseling and paraprofessional staff to ascertain the needs and interests of all MVR staff. Other methods to determine staff development needs are quality assurance reviews, evaluation of consumer satisfaction surveys, and feedback and recommendations from the State Rehabilitation Council.

Results of the training needs survey are shared with members of the administrative team and regional managers. MVR works to provide training in a variety of ways to accommodate staff needs. Staff members regularly participate in both in-person, virtual/remote, and web-based trainings.

The nature and scope of the staff development program is tied to MVR's overall goals and priorities. MVR is committed to improving staff competencies to ensure that the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, will be fully implemented and the philosophy embraced. MVR training supports the goals and priorities that have been established in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

ii) MVR continues to participate and has collaborative relationships with research programs and partner agencies.

Other training areas, which MVR frequently sponsors, or staff participate in, are the following:

- Motivational Interviewing
- Legal and ethical issues in rehabilitation
- Medical and psychological aspects of disability
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder
- Vocational counseling/assessment
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Informed choice
- Social Security work incentive programs, including Ticket to Work
- Sexual harassment prevention
- Cultural diversity

- Job development/job placement/supported employment
- Transition from school to work and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA issues)
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Rehabilitation technology
- Missouri Rehabilitation Association annual conference
- Leadership training
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing for counselors working with this population
- Individual training requests pertinent to the field of rehabilitation
- Attendance at conferences/workshops related to MVR (e.g., traumatic brain injury, APSE-MO, Power Up, rehabilitation technology)

When applicable, staff can receive CRC and continuing education credits.

(3) Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—

- (A) Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**
- (B) The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

(A) MVR acknowledges the state code: 5 CSR 20-500.140 is the standard in Missouri for the highest degree required for VRCs.

The State of Missouri requires that a qualified VR counselor must have the following minimum qualifications:

- a master's degree from an accredited college or university in rehabilitation counseling, guidance and counseling, psychology, social work, or closely related field; and
- fluency in American Sign Language or other appropriate mode of communication if the counselor provides services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

For individuals whose master's degree is not one of the above areas, MVR requires them to complete a certificate program in rehabilitation counseling.

Of the 135 VRCs currently employed with MVR, there are 93 employees who meet the educational requirements for 34 CFR 361.18. There are 35 employees who are currently working on a master's degree/certificate program or awaiting approval to begin a program. MVR asks employees to wait at least 11 months prior to beginning their education programs to allow for adequate time to learn the initial duties of the position. MVR has found a higher success rate in performance and education using this methodology.

MVR continues to prioritize the CSPD funding of the above-mentioned VRCs who are involved in university coursework, certification (CRC), and licensure (LPC). MVR is committed to ensuring that VRCs' tuition, fees and books are funded to obtain necessary coursework to meet the above requirements.

The human resource manager (HRM) for MVR develops an individualized plan with each newly hired staff member to identify/evaluate specific staff development needs, required courses, available resources, and timelines necessary to achieve the standards in 5 CSR 20-500.140 and 34 CFR 361.18 or the appropriate CRC requirement. The HRM also monitors each staff development plan to ensure that all objectives are met. As necessary, the HRM consults with the state licensing boards and CRC officials. All staff members are required to submit updated transcripts to the HRM to ensure compliance with the objectives of the standards.

The above plan is non-discriminatory and encourages the retraining and recruitment of individuals with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds.

Annually MVR reviews the performance for rehabilitation staff to determine if they are consistent with the actual job functions, agency values and the Rehabilitation Act mandates. During PY 2021, MVR transitioned from its paper performance evaluation to an electronic evaluation used by all Missouri state agencies. This evaluation is performed biannually and provides rehabilitation staff with timely feedback on performance and professional development. MVR has a team actively working through the transition to align the evaluation with MVR's mission, vision and professional development goals.

(B) MVR continuously evaluates its hiring and training processes to ensure that staff has the education and experience necessary to provide a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and needs of individuals with disabilities. As mentioned earlier, MVR uses the state code: 5 CSR 20-500.140 as the standard in Missouri for the highest degree required for VRCs. This basic educational requirement is enhanced with ongoing training for new and experienced counselors focusing on business development/engagement and effective service delivery to individuals with disabilities.

Many newly hired VRCs have had experience working with a CRP partner providing direct employment services to individuals with disabilities. Other new VRCs have previous work experience with an independent living center, job center, social service agencies, a community mental health agency, or experience in education settings. Paid or unpaid work experience in helping individuals with disabilities obtain and maintain employment is considered valuable prior work experience.

MVR has a comprehensive professional development system that ensures that its personnel understand the medical and psychosocial aspects of a variety of disabilities. MVR endeavors to hire counselors who

meet the state code: 5 CSR 20-500.140 and prior experience working with individuals with disabilities. MVR augments that with professional development opportunities by providing training focused on specific disabilities. Additionally, MVR sends VRCs to conferences that focus on specific disabilities such as the Missouri Brain Injury Association Conference. MVR has statewide and regional specialists that have had extensive training and experience in their area of expertise, e.g., business specialists, mental health, autism, rehabilitation technology, agricultural-related rehabilitation technology, benefits planning, brain injury, hearing impairments, vision impairments, learning disabilities, and self-employment. These specialists are available to provide direct assistance to clients as well as consultation with counselors. All VRCs, regardless of their tenure, have the opportunity to work with a mentor who has expertise and experience in an area that is of interest to them.

MVR's clients have repeatedly expressed the value of having a high-quality rehabilitation counselor in reaching their employment goals. This input is gained through customer satisfaction surveys, individual letters, and public hearings. In order to help VRCs assess their client's skills and abilities to obtain and retain employment, MVR has stressed the value of counseling skills. VRCs are encouraged to have a "tool bag" of skills. Primary in this tool bag is the ability to hear and understand clients' goals, provide informed choice, and address the specific barriers to successful employment. All professional MVR staff is trained in Motivational Interviewing (MI), an evidence-based practice, which helps clients and VRCs have constructive conversations that identifies their values and goals resulting in an individualized plan to reach their employment goal. Using MI, VRCs and clients identify clients' skills and abilities, the supports that they need to reach their goals, plan for setbacks and challenges, and how successful employment will affect their lives.

MVR has a multi-pronged approach to assist staff with modifying environmental and attitudinal barriers that clients face. Group training and individual assistance is provided to new and existing staff to effectively learn and perform their position. As mentioned earlier, MVR places a high value on the counseling skills of staff. All professional staff and many support staff have received four days of MI training. On-going MI training is available for all staff. MVR offers case management training to new VRCs within the first six months of their employment. New VRCs are also trained to learn to advocate and understand environmental and attitudinal barriers clients face. All VRCs are encouraged to maximize resources by knowing and forming relationships with the varied resources in their territories. Many times, these resources can assist with environmental and attitudinal barriers. MVR recognizes the value of group trainings but also provides individual assistance to VRCs through mentoring and coaching experiences.

Advances in rehabilitation technology are creating opportunities for clients. MVR has statewide and regional specialists who offer expertise in this area. These specialists provide individual consultation and also help staff remain up to date with regional trainings. Additionally, MVR utilizes Missouri Assistive Technology for consultation and training purposes.

MVR has been providing additional resources in developing effective relationships with employers in both the public and private sectors. MVR has a team of individuals whose primary responsibility is working with employers and assisting in connecting clients with potential employment. Additionally, all

staff is trained and encouraged to develop relationships with businesses. MVR considers employers its partners and works toward helping them address their staffing needs.

MVR looks to the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) for local employment dynamics and labor market information. Job development and placement efforts utilize local level data to assist clients in making informed choices regarding their career goals, considering wages, turnover rates, current vacancies, and areas of job creation. MERIC has provided training to MVR staff to aid them in using its website with clients.

The MVR Business Services Team provides vocational planning training to staff and training on how to utilize vocational planning tools. One of those tools is MERIC. The team guides staff through MERIC's 11 Career Pathways for Missouri's key industries. The team also trains on the use of MERIC's Real-Time Labor Market data. The team provides training on Career Index Plus, which is an extensive and encompassing labor market tool. Further labor market training is available on Bridge, MVR's learning management system.

(4) Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

MVR employs seven vocational rehabilitation counselors for the deaf (RCDs), located throughout Missouri, who are skilled in manual communication for the deaf/hard of hearing. Biannually, they gather for training to discuss services and to receive training on deaf/hard of hearing topics. MVR employs an assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing who plans and organizes training. Three of the RCDs are deaf or hard of hearing. Each have met CSPD requirements.

MVR utilize various forms of technology to communicate directly with clients and staff that are deaf/hard of hearing including videophones, email, and texting as well as communication apps.

Any approved CRP has qualified staff, or they provide language accommodations or interpreters, to deliver Employment Services Plus to deaf/hard of hearing clients.

Applicants and eligible individuals who have limited English-speaking skills are provided interpreters funded by MVR. All brochures are translated into Spanish so that individuals and families who speak Spanish have access to information in their native language. The state has a contract with an over-the-telephone foreign language interpretation service, which MVR has utilized upon occasion for translation.

(5) As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

MVR works closely with the Office of Special Education and school districts to coordinate staff development activities and services for students with disabilities.

Throughout the year, MVR staff and special education personnel from both the state and local levels focus on participation in special education transition-related trainings/professional development activities. Examples of these activities include attendance and presentations at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Transition Summer Institute, Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education, Missouri Parents Act's (MPACT) Tools for Life Transition Summit, Regional Transition Networks, the DESE Administrators Conference, Missouri School Counselor Association Conference, Missouri Association of Career and Technical Education Conference, Missouri Association of School Administrators – Missouri School Public Relations Association Conference, Missouri Association of School Nurses Conference, and the Special Education Directors Academy. MVR coordinates opportunities for representatives providing pre-employment transition services to be a part of training and professional development activities. MVR hosted Transition Kickoff events for VRCs and special education teachers around the state. The events were originally held in Kansas City and Springfield and are now being replicated statewide.

The Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP) agreement is an interagency state and local program agreement between the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Special Education, MVR and Career Education); Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB); and local school districts in the state of Missouri. The agreement is embedded in the state transition MOU and is available for all school districts. The purpose is to facilitate the coordination of transition services from school to postsecondary training and/or employment for students with disabilities who participate in special education programs and are eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services. The MOU outlines roles and responsibilities among participating agencies and school districts in the development of off-campus work experience programs. Through these programs, students with disabilities who are receiving services through an individualized educational plan can earn high school credit in accordance with Missouri high school graduation requirements for the number of hours they work in a paid competitive, integrated employment setting. Additionally, MVR continues to work collaboratively with providers and local school districts to meet transition needs of students.

MVR, the Office of Special Education, school personnel, and CRP staff are involved in partnership activities, joint training, and technical assistance activities. Two assistant directors of transition and section 511 services are members of the Missouri Interagency Transition Team and an active member of the state's Special Education Advisory Panel. An MVR staff member familiar with transition services is an active member of the MPACT Board.

State Rehabilitation Council: The State Rehabilitation Council reviews and comments on the development of the CSPD plan and related policies.

COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION (Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act)

(j) Coordination with Education Officials. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

(1) Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.

Transition services provide eligible students with disabilities the knowledge, skills and opportunities to make a successful transition to postsecondary education/training, independent living and competitive integrated employment based on their educational and career goals.

Pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS) are provided to individuals who are students with disabilities. A student with a disability as defined in Missouri is

- ages 16 through 21 and
- eligible for and receiving special education or related services under an Individualized Education Program (IEP); or
- an individual with a disability for purposes of Section 504 (individual does not need to have a 504 plan to meet the definition requirements).

Pre-ETS may be provided to individuals as young as 14 years old if pre-ETS is determined necessary by the IEP team.

MVR, in collaboration with DESE's Office of Special Education and local education agencies (LEAs), will provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services in the areas of job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for postsecondary education/training, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy, including peer mentoring, for all students in need of such services who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services.

Each local MVR district office will also participate in pre-employment transition coordination with the local education agency to include attending IEP meetings when invited, using conference calls and video conferences, when necessary; working with local workforce development entities and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities; coordinating pre-employment transition services with transition services provided in accordance with IDEA; and, when invited, attending person-centered planning meetings for youth receiving services under Title IX of the Social Security Act. To effectively coordinate these services, MVR:

- conducted statewide training to include guidance regarding IEP participation for all MVR staff that serve students in Missouri high schools;
- worked in partnership with the Parent Advocacy Coalition Educational Rights Center to develop a video introducing VR services that can be shown at IEP meetings;
- conducted cross training on services to youth with local job center staff and MVR staff in Kansas City and St. Louis, the two largest metropolitan areas of the state;

- invited special education personnel to train new MVR counselors on transition services within the IEP;
- provided cross training with local CILs to include information regarding benefits planning; and
- is currently working in collaboration with DMH's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) to provide cross training with MVR counselors and DD support coordinators regarding their respective services.

To deliver pre-employment transition services, MVR developed two summer programs, which include a six-week paid summer work experience, one for VR potentially eligible students with disabilities in partnership with CRPs and a program with CILs for students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR. MVR collaborated with businesses and school districts to provide services in these programs.

MVR partners with Starkloff Institute in St. Louis in the Dream Big program. Dream Big serves high school students with disabilities who plan to attend college, trade school, or technical school. Dream Big Camps are weeklong summer camps that help these students explore a range of career options and learn what it takes to become a successful and independent adult.

In addition, MVR is contracting with the University of Missouri (MU), College of Education and Human Development, to provide assistance with the provision of pre-employment transition services. The University of Missouri has 47 pre-employment transition specialists located across the state who are certified education professionals and can go into the classroom, to collaborate with local education agencies and MVR to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services. Eight of the 47 provide pre-employment transition services in the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled.

MVR is also working with Wonderland Camp of Rocky Mount, an educational camp for children, teenagers and adults who have disabilities, to provide internship opportunities for both students and youth with disabilities. MVR sponsors students and youth with disabilities to participate in a week-long Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, as well as the Virtual Leadership Forum, developed in partnership the Governor's Council on Disability that focuses on leadership, citizenship, and social and career development skills. MVR funds deaf/hard of hearing students to attend the Rochester Institute of Technology for a pre-employment transition services camp.

MVR is utilizing its business services specialists to work with employers, MU pre-employment transition specialists and local education agencies on creating work experiences for students with disabilities. This collaboration, known as Groundhog Job Shadow, occurs throughout the school year. And, MVR is collaborating with its WIOA partners in providing seamless, coordinated services to youth and students with disabilities.

MVR has a policy that outlines transition activities and services including the timely development and approval of an individualized plan for employment (IPE) for each eligible student prior to leaving high school. MVR will provide for the development of the IPE as early as possible during the transition planning process, but, at least, by the time the eligible student leaves the school setting. The IPE will

include specific transition services or pre-employment transition services and supports needed for an eligible student with a disability or a youth with a disability, including youth with the most significant disabilities, to achieve an employment outcome or projected post-school employment outcome. An IPE is required to be developed in consideration of and coordination with the IEP of a student with a disability under IDEA or a student's Section 504 services. The IPE will be coordinated with the IEP and developed within 90 days from the date of eligibility determination and prior to a student with a disability exiting from high school.

(2) Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 CFR 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:

- (A) Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;**

The formal interagency agreement is between the state educational agency, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services, Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Offices of Special Education and College and Career Readiness, and Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind. The purpose of this agreement is to facilitate the coordination of transition services from school to postsecondary training and/or employment for individuals with disabilities who are enrolled in secondary education and are/or may be eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services. This agreement addresses the following:

- (A) consultation and technical assistance;
- (B) transition planning to include pre-employment transition services, focusing on competitive integrated employment outcomes;
- (C) roles and responsibilities and financial obligations;
- (D) outreach and identification; and
- (E) work-based learning experiences to include programs like Project Search.

The agreement also describes the coordination of efforts to satisfy documentation requirements regarding subminimum wage.

Collaboration may occur as a part of the Missouri Interagency Transition Team, described below.

Information may be provided regarding pre-employment transition services, MVR eligibility, and MVR transition services, as well as employment, the exploration of postsecondary training programs, and connections to community agencies/resources that may be appropriate for transition planning.

Information may be provided regarding collaboration with the local education agency (LEA) on work experience opportunities, such as internships, apprenticeships and employer-driven skills training.

Individual consultation and technical assistance may also be provided by MVR during an IEP or 504 meeting, during a person-centered planning meeting, etc. Consultation and technical assistance may occur in person, by conference call, video conferencing or by some other agreed upon means.

Special Education Advisory Panel

DESE appointed an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for youth and students with disabilities in the state. The advisory panel is appointed by the commissioner of DESE and includes an MVR assistant director of Youth Services. Other members include:

- parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26)
- individuals with disabilities
- teachers
- representatives of higher education institutions that prepare special education and related services personnel
- state and local education officials
- representatives of other state agencies involved in the purchase or delivery of related services
- administrators of programs for children with disabilities
- state agencies' representatives who provide services to children with disabilities including foster care and juvenile and adult corrections
- representatives of private schools and public charter schools
- vocational, community or business organizations
- representative of Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services

Missouri Connections

Missouri Connections is a web-based career exploration tool to assist Missourians in determining their career interests, explore employment opportunities, set up career plans and establish job search strategies and resources. Sponsored by DESE, Missouri Connections is free of charge to students, parents, guidance counselors, educators and jobseekers. Through Missouri Connections, OWD, Department of Higher Education, MVR and local school districts can utilize the same career planning tool with their clients/students. In addition to general career exploration/resource sharing, students/jobseekers may also develop a career portfolio by creating a unique username/password that will allow them to login and save information regarding their specific career interests, job search, resume, etc.

Students/jobseekers who are receiving services through one or more of the above entities may also

choose to share their login information thus eliminating the duplication of clients' records and allowing for more efficient and effective services for mutual clients.

Missouri Interagency Transition Team (MITT)

MITT was formed through the Office of Special Education and includes members representing state-level agencies, including MVR, across Missouri who have an interest in improving post-secondary outcomes for youth with disabilities. MITT meets to collaborate, break down service barriers, share resources, improve overall systems of service and improve data sharing among agencies. The team is in the process of developing interagency training.

The manager and director of Youth Services are on the MITT and works closely with other MVR management staff to disseminate information and provide technical assistance to improve transition services and outcomes in Missouri. Two full-time assistant directors of Youth Services each have a territory and work directly with MVR staff to provide regional support and guidance and coordinate services.

Missouri Parent Training Act and Information Center (MPACT)

Missouri Parents Act (MPACT) is Missouri's only Parent Training and Information center. It provides training and information to parents of students with disabilities from birth through age 26. A representative of MVR's supervisory staff is an active member of the MPACT Board. In addition, a representative of MPACT serves as a member of the State Rehabilitation Council.

MVR and MPACT collaborate on projects to assist students and youth with disabilities in reaching their full potential by developing Regional Transition Networks that include stakeholders from the areas of employment, independent living, education, and the community. These stakeholders create sustainable groups with goals based on the individual needs of the local network and create projects and outreach opportunities that improve life after high school for students and youth with disabilities. The needs of all students and youth with disabilities are considered, including the unique circumstances of justice-involved, foster, and adopted youth.

Project Search and Other Employer-Based Transition Training Programs

Project Search is a one-year, employer-led internship opportunity for VR eligible youth with cognitive/intellectual disabilities. It provides employability skills training and workplace internships for individuals with the most significant disabilities particularly students transitioning from high school to adult life. MVR is one of five required partners in the Project Search model. The other required partners are education, a CRP, a long-term provider (follow-along) and business. The first Project Search site was in St. Charles County and included a collaboration of St. Charles County school districts. In addition to the Project Search programs, MVR is partnering with the North Kansas City Public School District, Park Hill School District, Liberty School District and St. Joseph School District to provide similar employer-based transition training programs prior to high school graduation for eligible students with most significant disabilities. MVR district offices and counselors that serve each of these schools serve on an executive management team. MVR has made a commitment to assist with referrals and partial funding for training for MVR eligible youth to participate in these programs. In addition, through the supported employment

program model, MVR is also working in partnership with CRPs and school districts in Hannibal and Columbia to provide services for youth with disabilities through their employer-led work experience programs.

- (B) **Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;**

MVR will provide for the development of the IPE as early as possible during the transition planning process, but, at least, by the time the eligible student leaves the school setting. The IPE will include specific transition services or pre-employment transition services and supports needed for an eligible student with a disability or a youth with a disability, including youth with the most significant disabilities, to achieve an employment outcome or projected post-school employment outcome. An IPE is required to be developed in consideration of and coordination with the IEP of a student with a disability under IDEA or a student's Section 504 services. The IPE will be developed within 90 days from the date of eligibility determination and prior to a student with a disability exiting from high school.

- (C) **The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;**

The Office of Special Education shall monitor school districts in their responsibility to allocate resources and provide transition services under IDEA to students with disabilities while they are still enrolled in the secondary school setting. The LEA is primarily responsible for providing transition-related services while youth are still enrolled in the secondary school setting. Nothing under WIOA or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act shall be construed as reducing an LEA's obligation under the IDEA to provide or pay for transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities.

It is the LEA's responsibility to allocate the resources to implement the services agreed upon in the IEP. If an outside agency fails to provide agreed upon services in the IEP, it is the LEA's responsibility to reconvene the IEP team to determine how these services might now be provided. The LEA is not responsible for providing and paying for those services that another agency agreed to, but failed to provide.

In collaboration with the IEP team, the special education teacher's role in transition includes

- providing specific information regarding the individual's strengths, past achievements, and current progress in school;
- discussing and identifying courses which address the student's selected program of study and work experiences that might be beneficial given the individual's interests and identifying any strategies or accommodations/modifications to access the general curriculum;

- referring students with disabilities who may be potentially eligible for VR services and in need of those services, to the pre-employment transition specialist; and
- linking students with disabilities and their families to appropriate postsecondary services, supports, adult services agencies or programs, such as MVR, prior to the student's graduation or exit from high school.

Vocational rehabilitation services are individualized and based upon the needs and employment goal of each eligible youth. Therefore, some services may only be provided during the final year of high school or after the individual graduates or exits the secondary school setting.

The LEA is primarily responsible for providing and paying for those services related to transition planning for educational purposes while the student is still in school. MVR is primarily responsible for the cost of transition planning for employment purposes. In some cases, MVR and the LEA share responsibilities for the provision of transition services, which sometimes requires sharing the financial responsibility of providing services within the parameters of both the Rehabilitation Act and IDEA.

If there is a dispute between the student/client and the LEA regarding his/her IEP, the student will follow the process provided for in the LEA's school board adopted policy for this purpose. If there is a dispute between the student/client and MVR regarding his/her IPE, the student will follow the process provided for in MVR regulations and procedure.

Most MVR services are provided at no cost to the youth and the youth's family; however, payment for some MVR services is based on individual and family income/resources and the ability to pay for costs associated with a specific service. Comparable services may be used prior to the provision of transition services.

When a student with a disability is both in school and has an IPE with MVR, the cost of services necessary for both the student's education and for the student to become employed, will be delineated between the LEA in terms of what accommodation the student needs to complete his/her high school coursework and MVR in terms of what the student requires to attain employment per the student's IPE.

- (D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;**

MVR counselors will provide outreach to and identification of students with disabilities in need of transition services. Students are not required to have an open case with MVR to participate in outreach activities.

MVR will inform education staff, students, and as appropriate, families, and other authorized representatives about pre-employment transition services and the general vocational rehabilitation program and may include at a minimum the following:

- Purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program

- MVR eligibility requirements
- Application procedures
- Scope and services that may be provided to an eligible and a potentially eligible individual

Specific outreach activities may include, but are not limited to, attendance at IEP and transition planning meetings, area career fairs, back-to-school nights, group presentations, transition fairs, and other events where information about the vocational rehabilitation program may be shared.

A referral to MVR may be initiated by school district personnel, by youth self-referral, by a family member, or by other educational or community resource agency or organization. Referral to MVR should be based upon the youth's individual employment-related needs.

Outreach activities conducted by MVR should facilitate timely referrals. The vocational rehabilitation counselor will work with the LEA to develop a referral packet for students/families, and to identify application procedures that will enable the counselor to act quickly in obtaining written parent or guardian consent to meet with the student, open a case, and proceed with an eligibility determination.

(E) Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and

MVR and the LEAs coordinate with each other to satisfy the documentation requirements in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment. MVR contracts with the University of Missouri to provide pre-ETS services to students who are potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. LEAs are encouraged to refer potentially eligible students who are known to have a plan to seek subminimum wage employment upon completion of high school for pre-ETS as early as possible, and to document the recommendation for such services in the IEP if the referral occurs prior to age 16. MVR will maintain documentation of the provision of pre-ETS. The MVR counselor assigned to a high school will remain the point of contact for students seeking subminimum wage employment following exit from the secondary school setting. The LEA will document the completion of transition and pre-ETS on the Summative Transition Outcomes form jointly developed by the SEA and MVR no sooner than 60 days prior to the student's graduation/exit from high school and will coordinate the student's referral to MVR. The purpose for the late referral is to allow the student to receive maximum benefit from the receipt of both transition and pre-ETS prior to the referral. MVR will open the case and provide opportunities to explore competitive, integrated employment, including participation in career counseling and information and referral. The objective is to identify strategies and opportunities to maximize skills and strengths to assist students in obtaining employment in a competitive, integrated setting. However, if this is not possible, MVR will provide documentation to youth seeking subminimum wage employment after career counseling and information and referral services were provided and following a determination of "unable to benefit from VR services."

(F) Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

The formal interagency agreement between the state educational agency, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services, Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation and Offices of Special Education and College and Career Readiness, and Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind provides the assurance that neither the SEA nor an LEA may enter into a contract or make other arrangements with a subminimum wage employer for an individual who is age 24 or younger for which work is compensated at a subminimum wage. As long as the individual is a student of an LEA, the student cannot be involved in any subminimum wage employment such as

- work in extended employment at a sheltered workshop;
- participation in work experiences where they would be paid subminimum wages; or
- participation in work experiences that are not in a competitive integrated setting.

(k) Coordination with Employers. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

MVR continually reviews its strategies to develop new employer relationships and support businesses that employ individuals with disabilities. Some of its flexible strategies include increasing work-based learning opportunities, on-the-job training, internships, apprenticeships, progressive employment, and customized employment. In addition, MVR works with employers to ensure they have resources for necessary workplace accommodations and rehabilitation technology.

MVR is reviewing its internal processes to work more effectively with employers and WIOA partners. MVR customizes its services to meet the needs of business. It has several employer projects underway. MVR is partnering with multiple employers to provide a work-based learning opportunity for individuals with disabilities. It is also working with various businesses to assist in their recruitment and interview process for applicants with disabilities. One tool being utilized with this purpose in mind is the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP). TAP is a collaboration with businesses to assist them in finding candidates with disabilities and connecting them with available job openings.

MVR has built partnerships with most major healthcare systems in Missouri to assist individuals with disabilities connect with hospital job openings, job shadowing, and conversations with human resource staff to help MVR clients explore job options.

For several years, MVR has collaborated with workforce partners, CRPs and other agencies to plan and market events to assist employers with their inclusion initiatives. Rather than traditional job fairs where jobseekers meet with employers, MVR clients have booths for employers to visit. They create displays to showcase their talents, skills and abilities. Held at various locations around the state, these events are popular with clients and employers and continue to grow in number.

Workforce Development Boards host annual inclusion events. MVR assists with the planning and participates at these events, which focus on providing employers with relevant information on the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. Presentations range from businesses sharing their successes on becoming more inclusive to individuals with disabilities sharing their employment journeys.

In order to meet business needs, MVR developed business services specialist positions that provide statewide coverage at local and state levels. Business services specialists work with labor market information to support both business and MVR staff needs. These specialists not only offer services to employers and businesses, they also work with WIOA partners to develop employment collaboratives creating a central point of contact among agencies. These collaboratives, known as NEXUS groups, are across the state. They focus on connecting candidates with barriers to employment to business partners through meetings, planned events and panel discussions.

MVR has representatives on regional WIOA business services teams. The teams work with local Chambers of Commerce, local educational agencies, local and state economic developers, regional planning commissions, human resource groups and other business organizations to determine employer needs in workforce regions across the state. MVR and the Office of Workforce Development have initiated an employer survey. Feedback is used to assess how to better serve businesses' needs.

MVR has statewide involvement with the Department Labor and WIOA partners regarding apprenticeship development. MVR is represented on the Missouri Apprenticeship Team with other partners ensuring it stays abreast of all apprenticeship opportunities statewide to connect MVR jobseekers to opportunities for competitive integrated employment. The agency actively markets the new apprenticeship portal, www.moapprenticeconnect.com, created by the Chamber of Commerce with the goal of making connections between apprentices and apprenticeships. MVR's assistant commissioner is a member of the Office of Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning Council along with representatives from other partner agencies.

MVR may provide short-term, individualized job coaching through Abilities First Employment Services. Multiple clients participating in this pilot have obtained employment and started their apprenticeships. In the St. Louis area, multiple MVR clients have been selected for or completed a certified nursing assistant registered apprenticeship program that is a partnership between St. Louis Training and Applied Technology Services (A Division of Special School District), the Department of Labor, Missouri Job Centers and employers.

MVR is an active member with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation's National Employment Team (NET). This team represents a national network to connect businesses with a footprint in multiple states. It provides MVR with the opportunity to share with and learn from other public vocational rehabilitation agencies.

MVR utilizes the expertise of each State Rehabilitation Council member, which includes individuals typically associated with employers such as professionals from CRPs, CILs, workforce development, business, industry and labor. The council representatives provide valuable input on working with employers to increase competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities.

MVR is utilizing its business services specialists to work with employers on providing paid and unpaid work experiences for youth and students with disabilities. It has been coordinating with employers, school districts, CRPs and CILs to provide summer work experience programs. During 2023, 66 CRPs and 1,351 VR-eligible students participated in summer work experiences, and five CILs worked with 18 potentially VR-eligible students. The business services specialists work with employers, MU transition specialists and local education agencies on creating work experiences for students with disabilities. This collaboration, known as Groundhog Job Shadow Month, occurs throughout the year. MVR is working with Wonderland Camp, of Rocky Mount, on an internship program. MVR continues to collaborate with its WIOA partners in providing seamless, coordinated services to youth and students with disabilities.

(l) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

(1) State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

MVR and Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) have collaborated to develop a cooperative agreement to ensure maximum statewide utilization of services. By establishing a cooperative relationship, MVR and MoAT can increase rehabilitation technology services utilization and understanding by taking advantage of the expertise and knowledge within each agency. The agreement provides a plan for the coordination of services; for using the resources of the cooperating agencies to the best advantage; to provide information sharing, technical support and training; to facilitate the referral of potential eligible individuals between agencies; and to jointly serve eligible individuals in obtaining rehabilitation technology services. An MVR staff member is a representative on the MoAT Advisory Council. MVR staff participate in activities, training programs, and conferences sponsored by MoAT.

In addition to MVR's strong collaboration with MoAT, it has established strategies to ensure there are opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings through the utilization of assistive technology.

MVR works jointly with community rehabilitation providers and other partners to develop and sponsor on-going training in rehabilitation technology services.

MVR utilizes several rehabilitation technology projects, located at various Centers for Independent Living (CILs) statewide, which have demonstration centers for exploring, reviewing, and demonstrating various rehabilitation technology devices, services, and resources.

MVR has an assistant director of independent living/rehabilitation technology and an assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing/assistive technology. These staff members specialize in assistive technology related to independent living and deaf/hard of hearing services. They interact with MoAT and CILs across the state.

(2) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

MVR works closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded Agricultural Engineering Extension of the University of Missouri in the delivery of information and assistance for agricultural operators with disabilities.

MVR, the AgrAbility Project, housed within the University of Missouri, and the Brain Injury Association of Missouri have had a productive working relationship for more than ten years. The mutual goals of MVR and AgrAbility are a commitment of delivering vocational rehabilitation services, rehabilitation technology, information, education and a safe environment for farm operators with disabilities. Operating under an MOU, MVR and AgrAbility completed a fee-for-service plan for rehabilitation technology services.

MVR and AgrAbility staff set the following goals for future activities:

- Collaborate with the National AgrAbility Project on hosting joint training with partner agencies, MVR staff, community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) staff, consumers and AgrAbility staff.
- Participate in national conferences and forums on AgrAbility, MVR, and rehabilitation technology services for rural agricultural services for eligible individuals with disabilities.

(3) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;

MVR sponsors students with disabilities to participate in the Governor's Council on Disability Missouri Youth Leadership Forum that focuses on leadership, citizenship, social and career development skills. CRPs work with out-of-school youth in providing job development and placement services along with skills training. It also participates in council's Virtual Leadership Forum.

MVR cooperates with the CILs in providing services for adults and students with disabilities. It coordinates summer work experience projects with the CILs. The CIL Summer Pre-Employment Transition Services programs provides potentially VR-eligible students with disabilities access to job exploration activities, workplace readiness training and social support and self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

(4) State use contracting programs;

MVR does not participate in state-use contracting programs.

(5) State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

MVR has an MOU with the Missouri State Medicaid Authority, Missouri Department of Social Services MOHealthNet Division, which considers the requirements of WIOA. This includes coordination of employment activities with the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) Division of Behavioral

Health (BH) and Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD), which serve individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders and intellectual disabilities provided under the Medicaid state plan and waivers.

(6) State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;

MVR has an MOU with DMH, the state agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health services, which covers DMH's BH and DD divisions. The agreement outlines the collaboration on existing services, alignment of funding sources, information and data sharing, referrals and on-going development of services.

DMH's BH and MVR work together to increase access to evidence-based supported employment, also known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS), for adults with serious mental illnesses who are interested in improving their work lives. Missouri has 33 Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers (CMHCs) participating in this implementation collaborative. Ongoing technical assistance and fidelity reviews to the evidence-based practice are provided by a state trainer and a team consisting of MVR and DMH employees. The partnership between DMH and MVR includes a training format, offered to interested CMHCs statewide, on adopting IPS and on improving existing employment activities within treatment services. DMH and MVR implemented IPS for youth with serious mental illnesses in several sites.

MVR partners with the DMH-DD division to deliver customized employment services that promote specific abilities of individuals with disabilities and meets employers' needs through flexible strategies.

Additional partnering activities include the sponsoring of an employment summit with the Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare to facilitate clinical integration of behavioral health and community employment efforts and MVR's and DMH BH's co-funding of the customized Missouri benefits planning website Disability Benefits 101.

MVR has appointed a state liaison to collaborate with DMH and the governor's office in a variety of projects and activities. MVR has active participation in many of DMH programs.

(7) State agency responsible for providing mental health services;

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MVR has appointed a state liaison to collaborate with DMH and the governor's office in a variety of projects and activities. MVR has active participation in many of DMH programs.

(8) Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system; and

Public Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)

In collaboration with the Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), MVR has written cooperative agreements with all 34 public IHEs in Missouri. These agreements outline the responsibilities of each entity regarding the provision of services pursuant to the regulations specified in 34 CFR 361.53(d)(1).

Client Assistance Program (CAP)

MVR and CAP management staff meet on a quarterly basis to discuss important issues such as order of selection, new policies, best case practices, due process hearings and mediation, performance measures, joint training activities and public hearings. The CAP is a frequent participant and presenter at MVR-sponsored training sessions. The director of advocacy services with Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services, which CAP is a part of, is a governor-appointed member of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council and sits on the Council's Planning Committee, which reviews the state plan, and also on the Impartial Hearing Officer and Program Evaluation committees.

Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH)

MVR has appointed a state liaison to collaborate with DMH and the governor's office in a variety of projects and activities. The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council has active and cooperative participation with MVR, DMH, the governor's office and other agencies.

MVR has active participation in the following DMH programs:

- Division of Behavioral Health--Psychiatric Services State Advisory Council
- Division of Developmental Disabilities State Employment Leadership Network

- MVR/Division of Behavioral Health Individual Placement with Supports Evidence-Based Supported Employment Program implementation

MVR partners with the Department of Mental Health-Developmental Disabilities Division to deliver customized employment services that promote specific abilities of individuals with disabilities and meets employers' needs through flexible strategies.

MVR is collaboratively funding Disability Benefits 101 with DMH's Division of Behavioral Health Services.

MVR fosters cooperation and partnership with the Department of Mental Health's Behavioral Health Division through a statewide collaborative, which is a steering team comprised of both agencies to direct the collaborative efforts to serve individuals with severe and persistent mental illness.

MVR has signed cooperative agreements with 33 nonprofit Community Mental Health Centers, which provide IPS services to MVR clients.

Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB)

MVR and RSB have a cooperative agreement for serving individuals who are Deaf-blind. Individuals who meet the Helen Keller definition of Deaf-blind may receive services from both agencies. MVR and RSB staff participated in joint training to discuss the cooperative agreement and best-case practices developed to outline coordination of services from both agencies. The cooperative agreement provides an opportunity for each agency to serve individuals with multiple disabilities by taking advantage of the skills and expertise within each agency, while at the same time, utilizing the resources of MVR and RSB to the best advantage.

Missouri Reentry Process

MVR participates in the Missouri Reentry Process, which encourages collaboration between state and local agencies to improve the transition of justice involved individuals leaving prison and returning to Missouri communities and work. State and local agencies include the Departments of Corrections, Office of Workforce Development, Mental Health, Revenue, Social Services, Economic Development, Public Safety, and Health and Senior Services; Elementary and Secondary Education; Missouri Board of Probation and Parole; and Office of the State Court Administrator. Local community representatives include law enforcement, the faith-based community, crime victims and service/treatment providers. MVR is part of the Reentry 2030 Initiative.

Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

There are 21 Independent Living Centers in Missouri. MVR and the CILs work together on a regular basis to routinely share referrals and provide services to mutual clientele. A number of CILs have MVR district staff as active board members.

MVR continues to collaborate with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the CILs to provide direct services to individuals with disabilities. The state plan developed by SILC and the CILs details the tasks necessary to accomplish the delivery of independent living services that will assist consumers with disabilities to achieve their goals. MVR and SILC utilize an outcome-based measurement tool for CILs to determine consumer satisfaction.

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Office of Special Education and Missouri Sheltered Workshop Managers

MVR works with DESE's Office of Special Education and Missouri sheltered workshop managers to comply with Section 511 of WIOA. This collaboration ensures that individuals with disabilities have access to information and services that will enable them to achieve competitive integrated employment. The Office of Special Education provides funding and technical assistance along with regulations and guidelines for the establishment and operation of sheltered workshops. Missouri sheltered workshop managers partner with MVR to carry out the requirements of Section 511. MVR staff provides workshop employees with career counseling and information and referral to local geographic resources that offer employment-related services and support to reach competitive integrated employment. MVR has dedicated staff members to assist in the implementation of Section 511 activities.

Governor's Council on Disability

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) promotes full participation and inclusion of the nearly 1 million Missourians with disabilities in all aspects of community life by educating citizens, businesses, schools, universities and others of their rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

MVR sponsors students and youth with disabilities to participate in a week-long Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, developed by the GCD that focuses on leadership, citizenship, and social and career development skills. MVR also participates in the GCD's Virtual Leadership Forum.

An MVR staff member is the liaison to the GCD and attends its quarterly meetings. Likewise, the GCD executive director attends the SRC quarterly meetings and provides input.

(9) Other private nonprofit organizations.

MVR enters into cooperative written agreements with nonprofit, private CRPs to provide services on a fee-for-service basis to individuals with disabilities. MVR does not own or operate any of the programs. The CRP must be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) or other approved accreditation entities as specified in the agreement. All CRPs must agree to the provisions of and sign the cooperative agreement with MVR prior to providing services to MVR consumers. CRPs provide services which may include job development, supported employment, employment skills training, employment services and employment transition services for individuals with disabilities. All CRP programs emphasize community integrated competitive employment.

MVR district offices meet with local CRPs to outline joint activities assisting mutual consumers in reaching employment outcomes. MVR and CRP staff offer input on service delivery processes and develop action plans to improve those processes. Other collaborative activities involve joint training programs.

MVR held four virtual VR/CRP summits during 2021 and 2022. In 2023, the summits returned to in-person meetings with four held statewide and an added virtual option. MVR staff and CRP direct services staff attended the meetings. The purpose of the summits was to enhance communication, promote partnering, share best practices, gather feedback and provide joint training. MVR and the Individual Placement Support (IPS) Services Team held several IPS summits.

The CRP-MVR team reviews and updates goals and priorities within the CRP-MVR agreement. Through collaborative efforts, MVR and CRP partners have strengthened the requirements for CRPs who want to provide Employment Services Plus in the areas of deaf/hard of hearing, brain injury, and/or autism spectrum disorder.

Collaboration and partnership continue to be cornerstones of the relationship between MVR and CRPs in Missouri and have created an environment of creativity and innovation. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to review progress on projects, service delivery and to discuss current and future issues warranting attention.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The (Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by title IV of WIOA, ¹ and its State Plan supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;
2.	In the event the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the designated State agency must include a designated State unit for the VR program (Section 101(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act). As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) ² agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ³ , the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c), and all applicable regulations ⁴ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit, agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ⁵ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ⁶ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

¹ Public Law 113-128.

² All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

³ No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁴ Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 CFR part 361.

⁵ No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁶ Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 CFR part 363.

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
4.	The designated State unit, or if not applicable, the designated State agency has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, and is responsible for the administration of the VR program in accordance with 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c);
5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7.	The (Chris Clause, Ph.D.) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
8.	The (Assistant Commissioner) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
1.	Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2.	Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
	submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 C.F.R. 76.140.
3.	<p>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. (d) the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3). (e) as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. (f) as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. (g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. (h) the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (k) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (l) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A). (m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
4.	<p>Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act. (c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act. (d) determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act. (g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act. (h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs. (j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) has developed and will implement, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and (B) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and (ii) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25), and 113).

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
	(iii) shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5.	Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan: (a) The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.	Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI): (a) The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.	Provision of Supported Employment Services: (a) The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
	funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Appendix 1: Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

Include the state's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

	Vocational Rehabilitation Program			
	Program Year: 2024		Program Year: 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) ²²	61.9%	66.0%	62.6%	66.2%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) ²²	57.3%	63.7%	57.9%	63.9%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) ⁷	\$5,676	\$5,676	\$5,732	\$5,732
Credential Attainment Rate	45.0%	62.0%	45.5%	62.2%
Measurable Skill Gains	75.2%	75.2%	76.0%	76.0%

	All WIOA Core Programs			
	Program Year:		Program Year:	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level

Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable		Not Applicable	
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Additional Indicators of Performance
1.
2.
3.
4.